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South Australian exploration
to 1856

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Historical Compilations based upon the Study of Original Documents.

No. 2

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EXPLORATION

to 1856

BY

GWENNETH WILLIAMS

TINLINE SCHOLAR, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

Exchange


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THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM 1630 TO 1830

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

NEW-YORK: PUBLISHED BY J. JOHNSON, 178 NASSAU ST.
AND BY G. B. LEECH, 101 NASSAU ST. 1830.

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, 178 NASSAU ST.

FOREWORD

THIS thesis has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Tinline Scholarship, and it has, therefore, been deemed advisable to preserve the spelling of the original maps and accounts. Thus in the map of Governor Grey's route the name Mt. Schanck appears, while in that of Captain Sturt's Murray journey it reads as Shanks Mount, though the accepted modern spelling is Schank.

I would like to thank Sir George Murray, K.C.M.G., who founded the Tinline Scholarship; also the Board of Governors of the Public Library for publishing my thesis, and particularly Professor G. C. Henderson, M.A., Mr. Thos. Gill, I.S.O., C.M.G., and Mr. B. S. Roach for supervising the publication of maps and revising my manuscript.

Through the courtesy of Mr. E. M. Smith, I.S.O., then Surveyor-General, I was able to secure much useful information, receiving valuable assistance from the late Mr. Charles Hope Harris, of the Survey Department. Mr. H. C. Talbot compiled the map showing the route of J. A. Horrocks. To Mr. A. W. Piper, K.C., I was indebted for permission to use the York Gate Library.

In conclusion I wish to express my appreciation of the kindness of the late Mr. J. R. G. Adams, the General Secretary of the Public Library, and to thank the other officials of that institution, who have given me all possible aid.

G. WILLIAMS.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EXPLORATION

(to 1856)

Throughout the ages there have always existed men of heroic mould, men who have dared to leave the beaten track of the commonplace to "follow the Glean" that is "not of the sunlight, not of the moonlight, not of the starlight," but of a brilliancy which transcends all these—the strong, white blaze of Truth. To such finer spirits all great movements owe their inception: "the soul of the world's history is the history of these." Too often, alas! they are in advance of their time, and the majority of mankind are not ready to honour their achievements; ridicule and contempt, hatred and persecution are the rewards of the reformer. A century passes and the same doctrines which were received with contumely are now acclaimed by all, while their exponents are respected and revered. It is the forerunner who bears the burden of the world's jeers, his successor usually who reaps the recognition and the praise. A Hus is burnt but a Luther honoured as a great reformer; a Columbus is imprisoned and disgraced but a Vespucci leaves his name and monument in America; a Galileo is forced to abjure his scientific beliefs but a Newton wins prosperity and fame.

In the world of exploration too the pathfinder has suffered; not only must he contend with the ignorance and incredulity of his fellow men, as Columbus did; not only risk mutiny and rebellion amongst his followers, as Hudson did, but also he must face the perils of the unknown and dare the dangers of uncharted seas. Despite these mysterious terrors that well might daunt the courage of the bravest, adventurous spirits of all nations and all ages have voyaged forth to distant lands. India, America, Africa, and, in later days, Australia honour the heroic names of their intrepid discoverers.

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In the history of our country many brave explorers figure, but of these, perhaps, most fame is due to those hardy mariners who first visited the unknown south. The earliest voyages to our coasts seem lost in the obscurity of past ages, for many shadowy claims to the honour of originally sighting the new continent have been advanced.* Then in the annals of our land appear such names as Torres†, Tasman and, most famous of all, Captain Cook, who discovered and examined the fertile eastern coast. From that time the future of Terra Australis was assured, and 1788 witnessed the first settlement on our shores.

Although many voyages had been made along the Australian coast much was still unknown, practically the whole seaboard of what is now South Australia being then unexamined. But this condition did not last for long, and other navigators became the pioneers of South Australian exploration.

* Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, a French explorer, who sailed from Harfleur in 1503, landed, it is stated, upon an unknown continent. This was for some time supposed to have been Australia, but it is now thought to have been Madagascar. An unsubstantial claim was also advanced in 1855 by Aldama Ayala, who asserted that while on his voyage of 1520 Magalhaens had discovered Australia. In 1606 the shores of Australia were visited by the captain of the Duyfhen, who followed the coast from Gulf of Carpentaria to Cape Keer-Weer (Turn Again).

† Leaving Callao in 1605, Pedro Fernandez de Quiros discovered a southern land which he named Australia del Espiritu Santo. The vessel commanded by de Quiros mysteriously departing, Luis Vaez de Torres, the second in command, waited for several days in hopes of his superior officer's return. He then proved the supposed continent to be an island; he passed through Torres Strait and finally reached Manila in safety.

CHAPTER I

EXPLORERS BY SEA

Among the early mariners few possessed more courage and daring than the hardy Dutch seamen who visited the East Indies. Holland had become famous as a maritime power through the adventurous spirit of her sons, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the original explorers of our shores should be sailors of this nationality. The vessels of the seventeenth century were unwieldy and difficult to steer. As a consequence their crews were largely at the mercy of the elements, and it would appear that the first visits to our shores were probably due to accident, foul weather and adverse winds driving the vessel from her direct course into the unknown south.

As early as 1616* then, intrepid Dutch navigators had sailed along the western coast of Australia, which unfortunately proved most inhospitable in appearance; so desolate did it seem that all visitors to its shores were alike in condemnation of the country seen. These conditions did not encourage further progress, and it was not until 1627 that Pieter Nuytz† voyaged in the *Gulde Zee Paert‡* beyond the boundaries of previous discoveries. In this year, the vessel being swept from its course by fierce winds, he followed

* It was thought that in this year Captain Dirk Hartog, of the *Endracht* (or *Eendragt*) from Amsterdam had discovered the western shores of Australia, and to commemorate his visit had placed a plate on an island in Dirk Hartog's Roads (at the entrance to what was afterwards named Shark's Bay by Dampier). Doubts, however, have recently been cast upon the story of Dirk Hartog.

† He is popularly thought to have commanded the ship, but more probably he was the Company's first merchant on board. Flinders has stated that Nuyts was sent to Japan as an ambassador, and that he afterwards became Governor of Formosa, facts which seem to support the later supposition.

‡ Sometimes called *Gulde Zeepaard*.

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the coastline of the Australian Bight*; the dreary tract thus discovered received the name of this enterprising Dutchman and became commonly known as Nuyts Land†.

In 1628 the *Vianen*, another Dutch vessel, was similarly compelled to visit these shores, but made no discoveries of any value. The captain has left a laconic account of the two hundred miles or more of seaboard passed: "A foul and barren shore," he says, "green fields, wild, black, barbarous inhabitants."

So much emulation existed between the navigators of different nationalities that a policy of rigid secrecy concerning their discoveries was often maintained‡. Thus it is impossible to state definitely how much knowledge of southern Australia was possessed by the Dutch seamen of the period. Sir William Temple, Ambassador at the Hague in the second half of the seventeenth century, mentions that it had been proved conclusively that a southern continent existed. He also adds: "I have heard it said among the Dutch that their East India Company have long forbidden, and under greatest penalties, any further attempts at discovering that continent, having already more trade than they can turn to account, and fearing some more populous nation of Europe might make great establishments of trade in some of those unknown regions, which might ruin or impair what they already have in the Indies."

If this was so it was, no doubt, a result of the many tragedies associated with Dutch voyages in Australian waters. In 1629 we hear of the wreck of the *Batavia*||, one of a fleet of eleven vessels dispatched in order to take possession of the southern land. In 1656 De Vergulde Draeck was reported as cast upon Houtman's

* The Nuyts' Archipelago in all probability marked the limit of his explorations. The Dutch account speaks of "a thousand miles of coast," but allowance must be made for the irregularities of the shore line.

† See Harris's chart of 1705 for land of Peter Nuyts.

‡ It has been suggested that the Dutch accounts of voyages were published in inexpensive form for a large circle of readers, and that, therefore, those which did not contain exciting incidents remained unprinted.

Commodore Francis Pelsart, the commander of the vessel, then sailed to Batavia for help, but while he was absent a mutiny arose and over a hundred of the shipwrecked people were killed. When he returned in the *Sardam* to relieve the *Batavia*'s crew and passengers, the two ring-leaders were marooned upon the mainland and these ruffians appear to have been the first white men landed in this locality.

Abrolhos on the west coast of Australia, and one hundred and eighteen perished. In addition, in 1727 the *Zuydeck*† foundered upon the Abrolhos. It is no wonder if these and other wrecks deterred the Dutch from further attempts to create a New Holland in the south.

The succeeding explorers were men of French or English nationality, and Holland thus lost the possibility of a rich and powerful province in Australia. In 1791 George Vancouver, skirting the coast in the *Discovery* from Cape Leeuwin, discovered and named King George's Sound‡, while in the following year Rear Admiral Bruni d'Entrecasteaux in *La Recherche* voyaged along this shore||. So barren and forbidding was the country seen by these mariners that it seemed unprofitable to spend further time and energy in exploring a region apparently so sterile. Thus it was that no coastal discovery of importance was made until the expedition in 1800 under Lieutenant James Grant§.

On March 17 he had left England with orders to proceed on an exploratory voyage as far as New South Wales, being especially instructed to search for what is known as Bass Strait. His ship, the *Lady Nelson*¶, a vessel of only sixty tons burthen, was provisioned for fifteen months, and with a crew of fifteen Grant set sail for New Holland. Calling at Table Bay, he awaited a suitable season before continuing his journey to the south, and it was not until October 7 that he deemed it wise to recommence his voyage. On December 2 Grant, though surrounded as far as eye could see by apparently limitless ocean, determined that land must be near**,

* This dangerous feature had been named in honour of a Dutch captain, who, however, never visited Australia. Abrolhos is a significant and appropriate Portuguese term meaning "Keep your eyes open."

† Sometimes called the *Zeewick* or *Zeewyk*.

‡ Vancouver, leaving King George's Sound, sailed eastward, but unfavourable winds so impeded his attempts at exploration that he deemed it best to turn back. Termination Island marks the limit of his voyage to the east.

§ He went as far east as $131^{\circ} 38\frac{1}{2}'$.

¶ This was due to the representations made by Flinders to the Admiralty.

¶ Derisively known as "His Majesty's Tinderbox."

** This supposition arose from the fact that a dragon-fly visited the ship and, knowing the ephemeral nature of these creatures, Grant felt that the shore could not be far away.

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and on the following day, at eight o'clock, the first glimpse of the southern continent was obtained. In the distance could be discerned two rugged headlands, while inland the shadowy tops of two mountains rose against the morning sky. Grant, as their discoverer, had the privilege of naming these features; to the capes he gave the names of Northumberland and Banks*, while in the nomenclature of the mountains his professional bias is evident; one was called after Captain John Schank, of the Royal Navy, the other named in honour of Admiral Lord Gambier. Sailing onwards the expedition arrived in safety at Port Jackson on December 16. "We had," says Grant in his journal, "the satisfaction of being the first vessel that ever pursued the same track across that vast ocean." This fact has been fully realized by the South Australians of to-day, and steps have been taken to perpetuate his achievement: on December 3, 1900, the centenary of his visit, the foundation stone was laid for a commemorative tower upon Mount Gambier.

Interesting and important as these early explorations were, the following year witnessed an expedition of such great moment that all former discoveries within the boundaries of our State paled into insignificance before it. At this period there were still "two hundred and fifty leagues of the southern and western seaboard marked on the map as unknown coast." In order to remedy this lack of knowledge Sir Joseph Banks suggested to Earl Spencer the advisability of dispatching an expedition to the south. The proposal being favourably received, the *Xenophon*† was purchased and rechristened the *Investigator* in reference to its future sphere of activity. In selecting a commander the appointment of Captain Matthew Flinders fully vindicated the judgment and wisdom of the promoters, as this adventurous seaman had already given ample proof of his success in exploration. Among the party, which was carefully chosen, were numbered men of such merit as John Franklin‡, Robert Brown (botanist), and William Westall (landscape painter). All preparations having been completed, the expedition left Spithead on July 18, 1801, and sailed for Terra Australis.

On December 6 the *Investigator* arrived safely off Cape Leeuwin, and thence sailed for Princess Royal Harbour to refit.

* Named after the Duke of Northumberland and Sir Joseph Banks.

† A Warship of 240 tons.

‡ Later Sir John.

Whilst the ship was at anchor here Flinders availed himself of the opportunity to explore the neighbourhood, and then, leaving the port, coasted along the Bight previously examined by Nuyts. On passing Nuyts Archipelago Flinders left behind the land already explored and entered a totally unknown region. His object was to examine this country "so that no person shall have occasion to come after me to make further discoveries," an aim which he achieved most admirably. Although more than a century has passed since Flinders mapped these shores, save for a few alterations of very slight importance, his charts are still in all respects quite accurate.*

Passing and naming Fowler's, Streaky, Smoky, Anxious, and Denial Bays,† he discovered Investigator Group and Coffin's Bay.‡ Skirting the coast and naming all prominent features, Flinders now sailed to Sleaford Bay||, where he anchored on February 20, 1802.

It was here that a sad catastrophe marred the happiness of the explorers and cast a cloud of gloom over their hitherto successful voyage. On February 20 Thistle Island was approached, and on the following day Flinders satisfied himself that it was not connected with the mainland. As the water supply was decreasing rapidly, Mr. Thistle, with William Taylor, a midshipman, and six sailors, left the ship to search for an anchorage nearer the mainland and also to endeavour to find fresh water. "At dusk in the evening," says Flinders, "the cutter was seen under sail returning from the mainland, but not arriving in half-an-hour, and the sight of it

* In the "Register" of July 23, 1845, a tribute is unwittingly paid to the explorer's care and zeal. Captain Irving, of the schooner *Sister*, reports the discovery of a small island which he has named in honour of his vessel. "This island," says the account, "does not appear on Flinders's chart." Then, feeling that some explanation is necessary, the statement continues: "It is evident that the great navigator took his sights inside Greenly Islands and then stood inshore, when the approach of night or foul weather would have prevented him getting a glimpse of the *Sister*."

† Fowler's Bay was so called after his first lieutenant; Streaky Bay obtained its name from the discolouration of the water; that of Smoky Bay was due to numerous bush fires; and Denial Bay was so named from its proximity to St. Peter's Island, and also from the fact that their hopes of penetrating into the interior of Australia were proved to be deceptive.

‡ Flinders says: "In making the various alterations required in the 'Investigator,' and in performing the duties incident to an equipment of this nature, I received the most ready concurrence and assistance from Isaac Coffin, Esq. (afterwards Vice-Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart.), the Resident Naval Commissioner at Sheerness."

|| Named in remembrance of a spot in his beloved Lincolnshire.

having been lost rather suddenly, a light was shown, and Lieutenant Fowler went in a boat with a lanthorn to see what might have happened." Fowler was, owing to the darkness, unable to see any signs of the missing men, although having been nearly upset by a very strong rippling of the tide, he suspected that this had been the fate of his former shipmates. After an anxious night the upturned cutter was discovered next morning, but no trace of its ill-fated occupants could be seen. The inlet where this disaster had occurred was called Memory Cove, and to each of the six islands* nearest Cape Catastrophe Flinders gave the name of one of the lost seamen. A copper plate† was also erected by the Captain to honour the memory of the dead and serve as silent witness to the perils of early exploration.

Leaving this vicinity Flinders now entered Port Lincoln, where he remained until March 6 to refit his vessel; his leisure was spent in exploring the neighbourhood, and Boston Bay, Louth Bay, Sleaford Mere and other names testify to his never-failing zeal and his love for his native county. Reluctantly leaving such a beautiful harbour, Flinders now sailed northward, naming such features as Mount Arden and Mount Brown: indeed, while Flinders explored the head of the gulf, Westall, Brown, and Bauer, with attendants, visited the latter mountain. If the coastline of Spencer's Gulf were followed the Captain believed a channel might be found leading into Carpentaria, but such hopes were doomed to speedy disappointment, for the gulf was discovered to terminate in dreary mud flats and naught remained but to return. He was convinced of the impossibility of such a means of communication.

The vessel now proceeded down the east side of the gulf when, a storm arising, Flinders took shelter under Point Marsden and

* Grindal, Hopkins, Smith, Williams, Little and Lewis Islands. Taylor's Isles were named after the midshipman.

† The inscription on the original plate was supposed to be as follows:
"Memory Cove.

H.M.S. Investigator, M. Flinders Com.

Anchored here February 22, 1802.

Mr. John Thistle Master

William Taylor Midm. and

6 able seamen were unfortunately
lost near this place from being upset
in a sudden squall. The boat was found
but the bodies were not recovered."

entered Nepean Bay.* Anchoring the ship here, the party landed and found numerous kangaroos, many of which the sailors killed. "The whole ship's company," says Flinders, "was employed this afternoon in skinning and cleaning the kangaroos, and a delightful regale they afforded after four months' privation from almost any fresh provisions. . . . In gratitude for so seasonable a supply I named this southern land Kangaroo† Island." From here Cape Jervis and Mount Lofty were distinctly visible and were named by Flinders; then, leaving the island, he skirted the shores of St. Vincent Gulf.‡

Another visit was subsequently paid to the island; hence a course was steered through Backstairs Passage to Antechamber Bay. Next the Pages were passed, and at 4 p.m. a report from aloft stated that a white rock was seen ahead. "On approaching nearer it proved," says the Captain, "to be a ship standing towards us, and we cleared for action in case of being attacked||. The stranger was a heavy-looking ship without any top-gallant masts up, and our colours being hoisted, she showed a French ensign, and afterwards an English jack forward, as we did a white flag. At half-past five, the land then being five miles distant to north-eastward, I hove to, and learned, as the stranger passed to leeward with a free wind, that it was the French national ship *Le Géographe*, under the command of Captain Nicolas Baudin." Flinders now visited the French commander§, and "he then informed me," says the British captain, "that he had spent some time in examining the south and east parts of Van Diemen's Land. . . . He had explored the south coast from Western Port to our place of meeting without finding any river, inlet or other shelter which afforded anchorage. I enquired concerning a large island said to be at the western entrance to Bass' Strait; but he had not seen it, and seemed to doubt much of its existence." Next morning the commanders

* So named after Sir Evan Nepean, First Secretary to the Admiralty.

† This is spelling adopted by Flinders.

‡ Also called after a member of the Admiralty.

|| France and England were then at war and precautions were necessary.

§ He was accompanied by Robert Brown, who could speak French, but as Captain Baudin knew English "so as to be understood," that language was used. At the interview between Baudin and Flinders in the French commander's cabin on April 8 and 9 Brown was the only other person present.

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met again, and in answer to Baudin's enquiries, "I then told him generally what our operations have been, particularly in the two gulphs, and the latitude to which I had ascended in the largest; explained the situation of Port Lincoln, where fresh water might be procured; showed him Cape Jervis, which was still in sight; and as a proof of the refreshments to be obtained at the large island opposite to it, pointed out the kangaroo-skin caps worn by my boat's crew, and told him the name I had affixed to the island in consequence."

In recognition of the meeting Flinders named the locality Encounter Bay*; then, bidding farewell to his brother explorer, he sailed for Port Jackson, arriving there on May 9. With the keen sense of honour that always characterized him, Flinders adopted the French nomenclature† for the features of the southern coast, the only exceptions being the two capes named by Grant.

The story of Flinders' later life and his unjust imprisonment at Mauritius‡ is too well known to need repetition here; it is

* This meeting is further recalled by a plate upon the Bluff bearing the following inscription:

In commemoration of the meeting near this
Bluff between H.M.S. Investigator—
Matthew Flinders—who explored the
Coast of South Australia and M. F. Le
Géographe—Nicholas Baudin
April 8, 1802.

On board the Investigator was John
Franklin the Arctic discoverer. These
English and French explorers held friendly
conference. Hence Flinders named the
place of meeting Encounter Bay.

† The names applied by Baudin to original discoveries by the French expedition are on the South-East coast: Cape Buffon, Cape Lannes, Rivoli Bay, Cape Jaffa, Cape Rabelais, Cape Dombey, Guichen Bay, Cape Berninot, L'Anse de Loo, and Cape Morard de Galles. These names have all been preserved. In addition he charted the South-West of Kangaroo Island, and here also his names are in current use: Cape Borda, Cape Linois, Maupertuis Bay, Cape Gauthaume, Bougainville Bay, etc.

‡ In 1803 Flinders in the Porpoise had set sail for England, but the vessel was shipwrecked with her companion ship the Cato on the Barrier Reef on August 17. The Bridgewater, which had accompanied them, abandoned the expedition; with the commander of the Cato Flinders returned to Port Jackson to secure help, sailing "250 leagues at sea in an open boat along a strange coast inhabited by savages." He then faced the voyage in the Cumberland, a small vessel of twenty-nine tons. Reaching Mauritius on December 17, he was taken prisoner on the grounds that his passport was only of use for the Investigator.

sufficient to say that six and a half weary years were spent in undeserved captivity before he secured his release in 1810.

Meanwhile the French had, far from imitating his noble example, endeavoured to claim as their original discoveries the places visited by Flinders prior to the meeting at Encounter Bay. In speaking of this perfidious behaviour the injured explorer says: "At the above-given latitude and longitude (34° 40' south, 138° 58' east), the discoveries made by Captain Baudin upon the south coast have their termination to the west, as mine in the Investigator have to the east; yet Monsieur Péron, naturalist to the French expedition, has laid a claim for his nation to the discovery of all parts between Western Port and Nuyts' Archipelago, and this part of Australia is called *Terre Napoleon* . . . not even the smallest island being left without some similar stamp of French discovery.* . . . Though he does not directly say that no part of the previously unknown coast was discovered by me, yet the whole tenor of his chapter xv induces the reader to believe that I had done nothing which could interfere with the prior claim of the French. Yet Monsieur Péron was present afterwards at Port Jackson when I showed one of my charts to Captain Baudin and pointed out the limits of his discovery; and so far from any prior claim being set up at that time to Kangaroo Island and the parts westward, the officers of the *Géographe* always spoke of them as belonging to the Investigator."†

This clear and impartial statement completely established Flinders' claim to fame as the discoverer of the coast of modern South Australia, so that when in 1814 his "Account of a Voyage to Terra Australis" appeared, the ungenerous action of the French was exposed in its true colours. There is in Flinders' words con-

* In the French atlas Spencer's Gulf became *Golfe Bonaparte*; St. Vincent's Gulf, *Golfe Josephine*; Kangaroo Island, *L'Île Decrés*; Yorke Peninsula, *Presqu' Île Cambacérès*; Investigator Strait, *Détroit Lacépède*; and Backstairs Passage, *Détroit de Colbert*. It has been well said that Monsieur Freycinet's map of the South Australian coast resembled a list of the French celebrities of the period.

† Flinders has stated: "The First Lieutenant, Monsieur Freycinet, even made use of the following odd expression, addressing himself to me in the house of Governor King and in the presence of one of his companions, I think Monsieur Bonnefoy: 'Captain, if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and catching butterflies in Van Diemen's Land you would not have discovered the south coast before us.'"

cerning their misrepresentation a manly restraint and generosity they would have done well to imitate: "How then came Monsieur Peron to advance what was so contrary to truth? Was he a man destitute of all principle? My answer is that I believe his candour to have been equal to his acknowledged abilities, and that what he wrote was from an over-ruling authority and smote him to the heart, for he did not live to print his second volume."

Disappointment and hope deferred had, alas! done their work too well, for on July 19, 1814*, the indefatigable sailor died. He has left a monument "ære perennius" in the name Australia which he bestowed upon our island continent, while he will live for ever in our history as a daring and courageous navigator.

For some years exploration in southern waters now languished, until Captain Dillon, the discoverer of the remains of La Pérouse†, visited Port Lincoln and the shores of Encounter Bay; two days were spent at the former anchorage, and the Captain confirmed the account of his predecessors; this was, however, an expedition of minor importance and resulted in no discoveries of value.

Much interesting information‡ concerning South Australia at this period can also be found in the account of his sojourn at Kangaroo Island given by Captain George Sutherland, of the Governor Macquarie. Having been for some years engaged in trade between England and New Holland, Sutherland was employed by a company of Sydney merchants to sail for Kangaroo Island in search of cargo. On January 8 the vessel arrived off the island after a pleasant passage of fourteen days, and anchored in Lagoon Bay. Seven months were now spent in this vicinity in securing seal skins and loading the ship with salt.

Meanwhile Sutherland had taken advantage of his opportunity to explore the neighbourhood; in company with two of the sealers

* See mural tablet in parish church at his birthplace, Donington, Lincolnshire.

† In 1785 the Boussole and Astrolabe were dispatched on a voyage of discovery to the South; and, having anchored in Botany Bay on January 26, 1788, the vessels departed on March 10, and from that time mysteriously disappeared. In 1826 Captain Dillon found that the missing ships had been lost on a reef at Mallicollo. Messieurs Bougainville and Decampaix, of the Thetis and L'Espérance, had erected a monument to the lost seamen at Sydney in 1825.

‡ Sutherland's own account of his visit can be found in "Colonization in South Australia, 1831." It has, however, proved to be unreliable.

dwelling in this locality he not only crossed the island, but also examined the coast minutely. His energy was rewarded by the discovery of a sandy spit which had hitherto escaped notice, and to which he gave the name of Sutherland Shoal; he also produced a map of the island, marking in reefs and rocks, some of which had been previously overlooked. In addition he gives a somewhat exaggerated description of the country and its inhabitants. These were for the most part escaped prisoners, although a few traders resided there. One of them had assumed the title of governor and exacted a rough obedience from his unruly subjects.

Of the mainland Sutherland says little, having only landed there once, on the shore between Point Riley and Corny Point. His men, however, had put in at several places in search of water. On August 12, having finished his work in this vicinity, Sutherland left the island and returned to Sydney.

Other sailors also showed commendable enterprise, amongst those who traded with the islanders being numbered Captain Hart, but their interests appear to have been more in the direction of commerce than of discovery.

CHAPTER II

EXPLORERS BY LAND

Hitherto the pioneers of South Australian exploration had been navigators of ability and daring, who, ignoring the dangers of uncharted rocks and treacherous tides, had sailed forth to solve the mystery of unknown seas.

In 1829, however, a leader arose who, treating with contempt all trivial fears of personal safety, determined to penetrate the southern wilderness from the neighbouring province of New South Wales. Captain Sturt* had already served his apprenticeship as an explorer, and in the previous year had demonstrated his right to be regarded as a master of his craft. That expedition, being within the borders of New South Wales, need not be considered here. It is sufficient to say that through this journey Captain Charles Sturt gained much of the wisdom and experience by which South Australia afterwards profited. The result of this enterprise was an increase of public interest in exploration due to the discovery of the Darling, and a concentration of attention upon the Murrumbidgee and the country surrounding it. These two factors combined to make another expedition seem advisable, and accordingly in 1829 Sturt received the Governor's instructions to prepare to set out once more. He was ordered to "trace the Murrumbidgee, or such rivers as it may be connected with, as far as practicable," in the event of failure being advised to regain the banks of the Darling.

Preparations were now commenced, every requisite or comfort being included in the equipment; a whale boat in sections, a small boat, and arms for each member of the party were all numbered in the outfit. The Governor also prudently made arrangements for

* The captain had arrived in Australia with a detachment of his regiment, the 39th, in charge of convicts, on May 25, 1827.

the explorers to be met on their return in case of privation or distress.

On November 3 all plans were completed and the majority of the party* set out, accompanied by Mr. Thomson as far as Brownlow Hill, whence they proceeded to Cookbundoon. Then crossing the western extremity of Goulburn Plains, they encamped behind Doctor Gibson's home at Tyranna, and received every kindness from the doctor, who supplied provisions to the travellers. On the 17th Breadalbane Plains were entered, and on the following day Mr. Hume's station on the Lorn was passed. Crossing the stream the party pushed on to Yass Plains, from there striking north-west, to gain the Murrumbidgee banks. This river was seen to be a deep-flowing stream sweeping onward with regular current, a fact which encouraged the belief that it would continue an uninterrupted course until the ocean was reached. Sturt now followed its banks, but this proved to be a task of some difficulty, for uneven ground impeded the passage of the drays, and it was found necessary to cross and recross in order to obtain level stretches on which they could travel. The country was steadily improving in appearance, and bands of natives were frequently seen.

On the 27th the travellers reached Mr. Whaby's station, the last outpost of civilization†. Hence their path lay through virgin wilderness, peopled by savages, who were expected to be treacherous and ferocious. Undaunted by such forebodings, however, the little band of explorers crossed the Murrumbidgee and pressed onward. On Pondebadgery Plain a halt of a day was made amidst most pleasing surroundings; then, continuing to skirt the river banks, they reached some fertile flats which they named Hamilton Plains‡. Leaving this locality the travellers again followed the Murrumbidgee's course, and, as they were nearing the parallel where many of the rivers had been found to become exhausted, anxiety was felt lest the Murrumbidgee should end similarly. Owing to a statement by the natives that a river, pre-

* The personnel of the expedition was as follows: Captain Sturt, Mr. George McLeay, Sturt's servant Harris, and his comrade Hopkinson, Fraser, Robert Harris, Clayton the carpenter, and several convicts.

† Near the junction of the Murrumbidgee and the Dumot (or Tumut).

‡ In honour of the surgeon of the 39th.

simply the Lachlan*, was only a short distance to the north-west. Sturt left the Murrumbidgee and struck off to find it. The attempt being unsuccessful, he rejoined the main party, who were still travelling along the river banks.

A most desolate and dreary region was now entered; it seemed, indeed, "a great gray chaos, a land half made." Sturt states at this time: "Our route was over as melancholy a tract as ever was travelled. The plains to the north and north-west bounded the horizon; not a tree of any kind was visible upon them. It was equally open to the south, and it appeared as if the river was decoying us into a desert, there to leave us in difficulty and distress." To add to the explorers' anxiety, grave fears were entertained concerning the river, which appeared to be growing smaller and shallower, and gave every prospect of ending in reedy swamps. On questioning a party of natives Sturt was once more informed of the proximity of the Lachlan; it was said to be only one day's journey distant. A second attempt to reach it was, however, unsuccessful, although a large creek was discovered, which appeared to connect the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee. On the 27th consternation was caused by vast reedy marshes which barred their way, but, on examining the river, the explorers found that it continued its course with much of its former rapidity.

Sturt was now forced to decide what plan would be the wisest to pursue, for the former method of progress could not be continued. "I resolved," he says, "on a bold and desperate measure: that of building the whale-boat and sending home the drays." Having reached this decision, he had now to choose the men to accompany him on his hazardous undertaking. Robert Harris was placed in charge of the majority of the convicts, with orders to wait a week and then journey to the Goulburn Plains, while McLeay, Clayton, Harris, Hopkinson, Fraser and two of the convicts, Mulholland and Macnamee by name, were to form the crew of the whale-boat.

This journey was destined to prove by no means uneventful, and its commencement was marked by exciting incidents. A small boat which had been built to carry the provisions sank, an anxious time being spent in recovering the goods, while a little further on

* The natives spoke of the Colare, which from the direction in which they pointed, seemed to Sturt to be the Lachlan.

the whaleboat sprang a leak; this, fortunately, was not beyond repair. On January 13, 1830, the general appearance of the stream underwent a startling transformation: the channel became narrower, and floating trees blocked the passage, while the current increased in strength and rapidity. Navigation became so exceedingly difficult that much apprehension was felt lest further progress should become impossible. The stream grew still swifter, and suddenly on the 14th the boat swept out on to a "broad and noble river," the Murray of to-day. So great was the delight of the voyagers at this unexpected and gratifying sight that they determined to follow this new stream in hopes of still further discoveries of value. "It is impossible," wrote the leader, "for me to describe the effect of so instantaneous a change upon us. The boats were allowed to drift along at pleasure, and such was the force with which we had been shot out of the Morumbidgee,* that we were carried nearly to the bank opposite to its embouchure, whilst we continued to gaze in silent astonishment on the capacious channel we had entered, and when we looked for that by which we had been led into it, we could hardly believe that the insignificant gap that presented itself to us was, indeed, the termination of the beautiful and noble stream whose course we had thus successfully followed."

Negotiating the rapids†, which in some places rendered their advance difficult, the party proceeded, having been cautioned by four friendly natives, who had accompanied the party for several days, to expect danger from the tribes lower down the river. This warning was amply justified as on the 23rd a large party in war array was seen to be thronging the bank ahead and covering a sand spit near at hand. Fully six hundred savages, painted and bedaubed in fantastic fashion, were gathered at the edge of the stream, the men with spears poised ready to hurl at the voyagers. They seemed anxious to commence hostilities, the warriors uttering shouts of defiance as the boat drew near. A battle seemed imminent and likely to end disastrously for the explorers. Such a calamity was, however, avoided by the timely intervention of their four sable friends who, arriving at a most opportune moment, entered into an

* Sturt adopts this spelling.

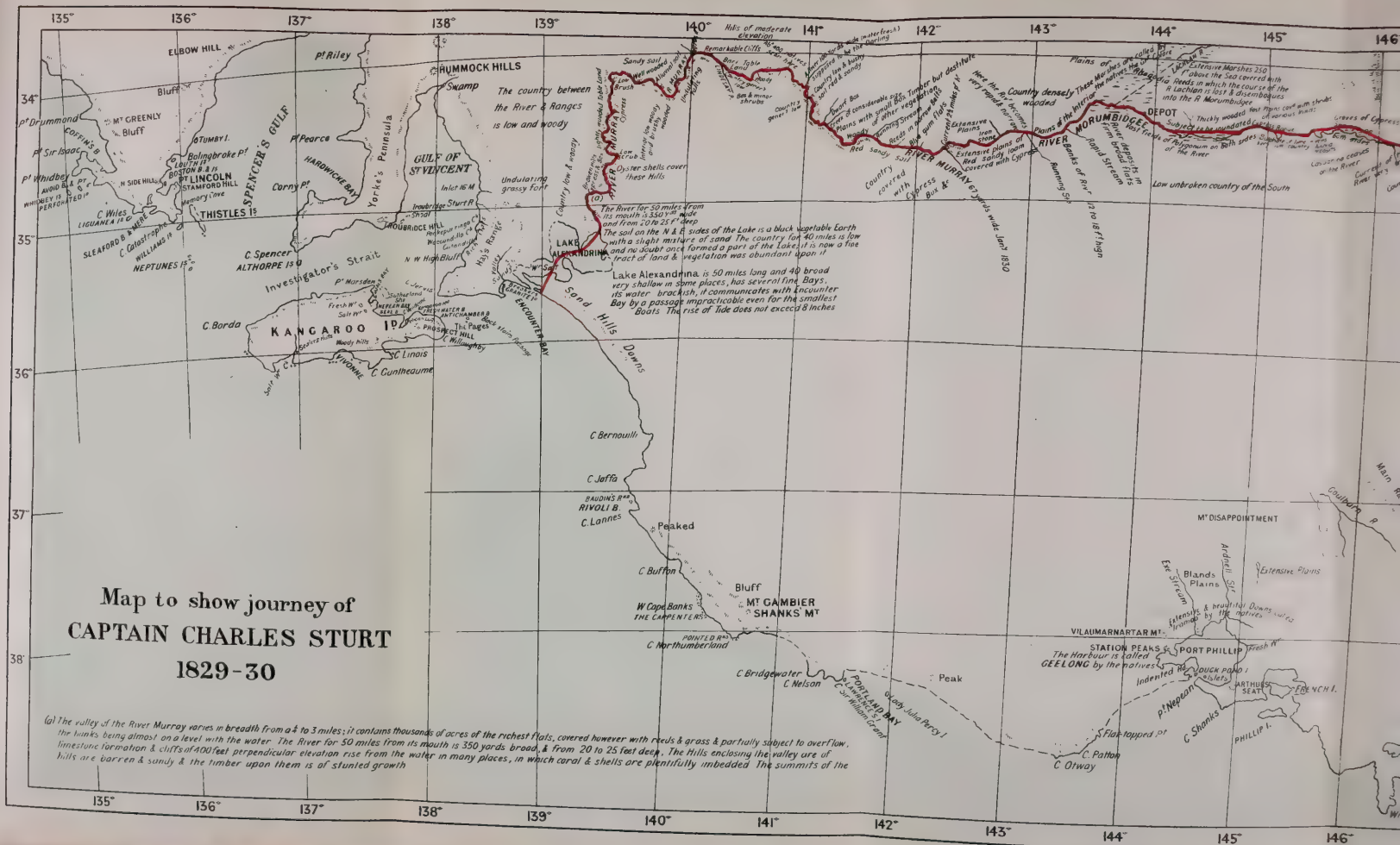
† The word is used by Sturt.

argument on their behalf. Meanwhile Sturt, noticing the junction of a new river with the Murray, created a diversion by landing on its banks, where about seventy natives were assembled. The party felt that this stream must surely be the Darling, previously discovered by their leader. "An irresistible conviction impressed me," writes Sturt, "that we were now sailing on the bosom of that very stream from whose banks I had been twice forced to retire. I directed the Union Jack to be hoisted, and giving way to our satisfaction, we all stood up in the boat, and gave three distinct cheers. It was an English feeling, an ebullition, an overflow, which I am ready to admit that our circumstances and situation will alone excuse." Further progress was now found, however, to be prevented by the natives' nets which stretched across the river, and a return was therefore made to the parent stream. As the party journeyed onwards the Rufus was passed, so called "in honour," says Sturt, "of my friend McLeay's red head"; soon the junction of another river was observed, and this, appearing to be a stream of some magnitude, was named after Colonel Patrick Lindesay, of Sturt's regiment.

The explorers had now been twenty-two days on the river: the country on either side appeared more and more barren and inhospitable, while provisions were woefully scanty. Under these difficulties the men began to weaken rapidly, and the leader was harassed by doubts concerning their ability to perform the homeward journey. The river was becoming deeper in its channel, and on the banks fossil formations appeared instead of clay and sand; this seemed to herald a change, and the sight of seagulls proved especially cheering with its suggestion of proximity to the ocean. The Murray now flowed definitely southward, strong gales raged, and heavy waves tossed the little boat.

On February 9 it was felt that the river mouth must be near, and the party landed to survey the neighbouring country. To their intense delight a beautiful lake* lay before them, while about forty miles away a densely-wooded range stretched from north to south; this appeared to contain a conspicuous peak, erroneously supposed by Sturt to be Mount Lofty. The little band now decided to row

* Mr. Thomas Gill, I.S.O., C.M.G., has proved that the lake had been visited by sealers at least fifteen months before Sturt first saw it.



Map to show journey of CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT 1829-30

(a) The valley of the River Murray varies in breadth from a 4 to 3 miles; it contains thousands of acres of the richest flats, covered however with reeds & grass & partially subject to overflow, the banks being almost on a level with the water. The River for 50 miles from its mouth is 350 yards broad, & from 20 to 25 feet deep. The Hills enclosing the valley are of limestone formation & cliffs of 400 feet perpendicular elevation rise from the water in many places, in which coral & shells are plentifully imbedded. The summits of the hills are barren & sandy & the timber upon them is of stunted growth.

south-west down the lake in the endeavour to find an outlet, but shoals and mudflats delayed their progress and finally the party landed, while Sturt, McLeay and Fraser walked to the mouth of the channel. This proved most disappointing, and Sturt foresaw no navigable entrance to Lake Alexandrina* from the open sea. "The mouth of the channel," he writes, "is defended by a double line of breakers, amidst which it would be dangerous to venture except in calm and summer weather; and the line of foam is unbroken from one end of Encounter Bay to the other. Thus were our fears of the impracticability and inutility of the channel of communication between the lake and the ocean confirmed."

What course it would be wisest to pursue now was the perplexing problem that Sturt must solve. No ship would enter Encounter Bay, so rescue by sea was impossible; the party dared not divide owing to the hostility of the natives, while the exhausted condition of the men rendered impracticable any attempt to cross the ranges to Gulf St. Vincent. Naught remained then but to pull wearily upstream, a prospect which might well daunt the bravest.

The journey homeward was one continuous course of patiently-endured suffering: in addition to utter weariness and ill-health the party were further handicapped by lack of food and by the troublesome conduct of many of the aboriginal tribes. The rapids still further exhausted the unhappy travellers. In some places it was necessary to haul with a tow-rope, while the exertion of rowing against the current reduced their strength speedily. Buoyed up, however, with hopes of soon reaching the depot, the explorers bravely struggled onwards, but on arrival at the camp it was found to be deserted, the homeward tracks of the drays being distinctly visible.

At this crisis the men well-nigh despaired, but decided to follow the course of the Murrumbidgee, which proved even more difficult to navigate than the Murray. Sturt pays many a tribute to the patient heroism displayed by his followers; the men, he says, did not murmur, but when they thought he was sleeping he would frequently hear them say: "I *must* tell the captain to-morrow I can pull no more," yet the morrow saw them bend once again to the

* Named in honour of Princess Victoria Alexandrina, afterwards Queen Victoria.

oars. "It would appear," he adds, "that we regained the place from which we started in eighty-eight days, during which we could not have pulled less than two thousand miles." Macnamee lost his senses from privation, and had to be relieved from rowing, while the others were woefully weak; the unfailing kindness and good-humour of McLeay was at this critical juncture a great source of strength to the party."

On April 11 Hamilton Plains were reached, but when eighty or ninety miles from Pondebadgery, seeing how fatigued the men had become, Sturt halted and dispatched in advance Hopkinson and Mulholland, who seemed well-nigh indefatigable. In six days' time the last ounce of flour was finished, and on the 18th they decided to move forward. However, the two travellers returned most opportunely to their relief, and by the 28th the whole party had succeeded in reaching Pondebadgery, where Harris was waiting. Their troubles were now over, and after six months of most arduous toil Sturt returned to Sydney on May 25, 1830.

The most fitting tribute that can be paid to the heroism of these fearless explorers is found in the words of Major-General Sir Charles Napier, himself a gallant soldier: "It is impossible to read the account of Captain Sturt's expedition down the Murray without feeling much admiration for our countryman and his companions. An intrepid enterprise! Unanimated by the glory of battle, yet accompanied by the hardships of a campaign, without splendours, without reward. This little band of undaunted men well knew that severe trials awaited their bold adventure, peril from men, from water, and from starvation; and if they fell amidst these dangers, no fame would attend their memory, their courage would be unheard of, and their death mourned only by a few friends. Nor was the fortitude with which they extricated themselves from the dangers of the desert less to be admired than the boldness with which they entered these wilds."

As would be imagined, great interest was now felt in the new country so romantically explored, and when Sturt's book, "Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia" was published, his description of the land thus seen increased the excitement already existing. "My eye never fell," he writes, "on a country of more promising aspect, or more favourable position, than that which

occupies the country between the Lake and the ranges of St. Vincent's Gulf, and, continuing northerly from Mount Barker, stretches away without any visible boundary."

It is, then, owing to Sturt's action that public attention became directed to South Australia as a suitable site for a new colony, and thus the foundation of our province is largely the result of this explorer's exertions. It is true that the settlement of our State must inevitably have occurred when more became known of its possibilities: many years, however, might have elapsed before any explorer arose sufficiently competent and possessing the courage required in such an undertaking. The fact that 1836 witnessed the settlement of South Australia is due to the daring with which Sturt faced a journey the success of which appeared so doubtful.

Not only were Sturt's explorations of the utmost benefit to our State, but they were also the direct cause of other expeditions in the same vicinity. As nothing had been heard of Captain Sturt for more than three months after his departure, the New South Wales Government dispatched the *Dart* in February, 1830, to search for traces of the party, while the *Isabella*, bound for Sydney from King George's Sound, was instructed also to watch the shores carefully. The latter vessel arrived at her destination on March 29, but reported no sign of either the *Dart* or of Sturt. Meanwhile the other boat was cruising in South Australian waters, where she remained from March 3 to the middle of April. Her log-book gives details of her wanderings, and it appears that she skirted the coast from Rivoli Bay to the head of Spencer Gulf. The captain reports that he learned from a sealer of a considerable body of fresh water discernible from the coast (this was Lake Alexandrina), and in support of his statement refers to a letter by Captain Forbes, of the Prince of Denmark, who says that a large lake had recently been discovered by a party of sealers.

In addition to this expedition inspired by Sturt, one of more vital interest visited our State in 1831. In the report of his discoveries the great explorer had expressed his regret at his inability to examine the lake in detail, and at his instigation Governor Darling therefore determined to dispatch another party to this locality. Accordingly Captain Collet Barker, of the 39th Regiment, was commissioned to proceed thither. Leaving King George's Sound,

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where he had been stationed, Captain Barker set sail on March 29, 1831, in the *Isabella*, and arrived on the western side of St. Vincent's Gulf on April 13. With him were Dr. Davis, also of the 39th, and Mr. Kent, of the Commissariat Department, and it is to these gentlemen that we owe our accounts of the subsequent voyage.

On April 14 he crossed to the eastern shore of St. Vincent Gulf, but although he sailed along the coast to $34^{\circ} 36'$, Captain Barker was unsuccessful in discovering any communication between the Gulf and the Lake. On the 15th the party landed for the first time, but returned almost immediately to the ship. Landing again on the 17th,* Captain Barker, Mr. Kent, Mills and two soldiers proceeded inland, followed the range and ascended Mount Lofty. The view obtained was extensive, while due east could be seen a similar mountain, and this, Barker thought, was the hill erroneously supposed by Sturt to be the one named by Flinders Mount Lofty.

Returning to the vessel the party now set sail for a bay situated behind Cape Jervis, which had proved to be a fairly safe anchorage for seven months of the year. North of this inlet a small stream was discovered, and named in honour of Captain Sturt; then, landing at the northern extremity of the harbour, a party comprising Captain Barker, Mr. Kent, soldiers, and prisoners set out for the Lake with provisions for six days. If they did not return or if the weather proved unfavourable the crew of the *Isabella* had been ordered to land additional rations.

Journeying to the east, and crossing the opposite range of hills, Barker descended into a valley running southwards, then, traversing this, he ascended a second range from which a view of Encounter Bay could be obtained. As the party reached higher ground the Lake and channel were clearly discernible. To the east stretched an

* It has been suggested that Noarlunga was the place of landing, and it has been stated that "Should any pedestrian be ambitious to try the same road to Mount Lofty, he would have to climb out of the Horseshoe by Church Hill, leave Morphett Vale, Happy Valley, and Coromandel Valley on his left and Clarendon on his right. He would then work his way along the high ground not far from Cherry Gardens and Upper Sturt till he reached the Waverley Ridge, above Crafers, whence he would have no difficulty in reaching the top."

Speaking at the unveiling of the Captain Barker memorial, January 21, 1903, Mr. Simpson Newland asserted, however, that the Captain had probably landed either at what is now known as the Port River or else at Port Willunga.



From "Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia." See also *Journal of The Royal Geographical Society*
By Captain Charles Sturt (VOL. 2)
 (VOL. 3)

"Two Expeditions" published 1833
 A USHMAN GOVERNMENT PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM



extensive flat backed by sand hummocks and low wooded hills, and, skirting this, the company found themselves upon the banks of the channel close to the mounds by which Sturt had pitched his tents. They then followed its course to the outlet, to the eastward of which was a sandhill, under which the tide swept rapidly and the water appeared considerably deeper. Barker, judging the width of the channel at this spot to be about a quarter of a mile, decided, since he was a strong swimmer, to cross to the other side in order to take bearings and ascertain the nature of the country beyond. The others endeavoured in vain to dissuade him, fearing that, as he was seriously indisposed, the exertion would overtax his strength; they also realized that since they could not accompany him, in the event of success he would be alone in a region where they had every reason to suppose the natives hostile. However, their leader persisted in his determination and, breasting the current, reached the farther bank with difficulty. He then mounted the hillock, took several bearings and descending on the other side disappeared from sight, never to return*.

Meanwhile Kent with two soldiers was searching for wood along the shore, and while thus engaged fancied that he heard a cry from the vicinity where the captain had last been seen. Those in camp, however, had heard nothing, but later, the captain still being absent, they became uneasy. Their anxiety was quickened by the sound of aboriginal dirges and the sight of native fires near Barker's Knoll. Convinced that his leader had been attacked by the blacks, Kent endeavoured to construct a raft to cross the channel, but no wood being available, the party returned to the bay to secure help from the vessel.

Those on the schooner, seeing their two signal fires, dispatched assistance, and steps were taken to enquire into the captain's fate. Sally, an aboriginal woman who spoke English, was questioned, but denied any knowledge of Barker. She told them, however, of a gang of sealers who were dwelling at Nepean Bay, and, on their applying for aid, two of the islanders came in a boat to investigate the mystery. A party† with this purpose in view set out for the

*The scene of the tragedy is to-day known by the name of Barker's Knoll. The sand dune has, however, disappeared.

† Consisting of Kent with two seamen from the *Isabella* assisted by two sealers, Sally, her father and uncle, with an East Bay native.

Lake, arriving there on May 7. As a result of their interrogations they learned of the death of Barker, who had been slain by three of the aboriginals*. These natives had seen his tracks, and following them had met the captain returning. At first frightened of his instruments, they, however, became bolder, and pressing forward speared their defenceless victim. It was stated that they were inspired by curiosity to see if they were capable of killing a white man, but it seems more probable that a desire to revenge the cruelties of sealers and traders animated the murderers.

Despite the tragedy which marred the expedition, the explorers were successful in establishing several facts of importance. It was demonstrated that there was no communication between sea and lake save the channel already discovered; the erroneous supposition held by Sturt, who had confused Mount Lofty with Mount Barker, was corrected, while Kent on his return to the *Isabella* had discovered a pass in the ranges through which a direct and level road led to Encounter Bay. In addition, their report concerning the country traversed had the effect of strengthening the growing belief that a colony established in South Australia would soon become prosperous. When the data of the expedition came to hand Sturt wrote: "From the above account it would appear that a spot has, at length, been found upon the south coast of New Holland, to which the colonist might venture with every prospect of success, and in whose valleys the exile might hope to build for himself and his family a peaceful and prosperous home. All who have ever landed upon the eastern shore of St. Vincent's Gulf agree as to the richness of its soil and the abundance of its pasture."

* The tribe, anxious not to be implicated in the crime, stated that three natives named Cummingereee, Pennegoora, and Wannangetta were alone those concerned in the atrocity.

CHAPTER III

CHOOSING THE CAPITAL

The expeditions of Sturt and Barker had seemed to fulfil the prophecies of those who believed that fertile tracts existed in South Australia, and that a colony planted there would soon prove successful. In England, therefore, during the next few years, enthusiastic believers in the future of our State were endeavouring to secure Government consent to a colonization scheme. Despite this interest and energy at Home, few expeditions at this period visited South Australian shores, and they were of only minor importance.

Captain Jones, it is true, skirted the seaboard of St. Vincent's Gulf, and from the account of his voyage must have entered what is now called Port Adelaide. "I discovered," he says, "a fine harbour sheltered by an island, which is about three miles in circumference, with abundance of fresh water upon it, as well as some streams running into the harbour from the mainland." His statement is chiefly of importance because of the needless anxiety it caused Colonel Light when choosing a suitable site for the capital. Much valuable time was spent in futile search for an anchorage corresponding to Jones's description, Light not having realized the great effect the seasons would have on the appearance of such a harbour.

During the meantime affairs in England had been progressing favourably; after many difficulties a Bill to "erect South Australia into a British province, and to provide for the colonization and government thereof," was passed on August 18, 1834. In the next year May 5 witnessed the appointment of the colonization commissioners, who exerted all their energies to comply with the conditions of the Act, and promote the sale of South Australian land. This proved difficult, and not until Mr. George Fife Angas sug-

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gested that a South Australian Company be formed did the realization of the colonizing scheme seem probable. Now matters proceeded smoothly, and it appeared likely that the pioneers would soon set sail for their future home.

In the interim Mr. Henry Hesketh, of Tasmania, determined to examine the coastline of the new country thoroughly in order to endeavour to find the most suitable site for the capital. On December, 1835, he left Launceston accompanied by Mr. R. Leake, and calling at Port Phillip, voyaged to Kangaroo Island, sailing thence to Spencer's Gulf, Gulf St. Vincent, and Lake Alexandrina. This was a commendable example of private enterprise, and testified to the interest felt in the foundation of the new province.

Despite the exertions of those intrepid explorers who had already visited our State, little was definitely known in England concerning the country to be settled. How vague and nebulous were the ideas of the colonizers regarding the structure, soil, and fertility of the province can be seen if the map which accompanied the first report of the Colonization Commissioners be examined. This was issued in 1836, yet it gave but little solid information to any intending immigrant. To the north of Mount Lofty a grassy forest was marked, beyond it being Sixteen Mile Creek. The country stretching to the far north was indefinitely described as undulating. In the south River Sturt was shown, and the tract to the southwest of the ranges broadly labelled flat and wooded, while only one anchorage was marked, that being in the vicinity of Rapid Bay. The words most likely to encourage a would-be settler were those which described a certain district in Kangaroo Island as "rich country," and this time has proved to be a mistaken estimate.

It was obvious that if the young colony were to prove a success, a more detailed knowledge of the country was necessary. It was, therefore, decided that a thorough examination of the coast should be made before the site of the capital was determined. The question now arose who was to be entrusted with this important and arduous task, and who should be responsible for selecting a suitable location for the first city. The point was decided by the Commissioners, who determined that this duty lay within the province of the Surveyor-General: "We have left the selection with the Chief Surveyor, combining scientific requirements with extensive experi-



ence as well on nautical as on military affairs." In settling who should fill a position of so much authority the appointment of Colonel Light* was suggested†.

This proposal met with approval; he was accordingly nominated to the vacant post, and preparations for a speedy departure were commenced. Colonel Light's position can have proved no sinecure in the busy days that followed, when the surveyors' vessels were being fitted for their voyage to the south.

The letter of instructions presented to the Surveyor-General by the Commissioners is so important in the light of later events that it is interesting to see how far the Colonel was justified in his subsequent actions by the directions he received.

"You will now proceed to make a careful examination of the coast in the central parts of the colony, excepting only places where the previous examinations by Captain Flinders and other navigators clearly show that no good harbour is to be found. Your attention will be particularly directed to Nepean Bay and Port Lincoln, but more especially to the line of coast extending from the eastern part of Encounter Bay to the northern point of Gulf St. Vincent. The inlet in latitude $34^{\circ} 55'$, and the harbour reported to have been discovered by Jones about latitude $34^{\circ} 40'$, demand a careful examination. You will ascertain beyond all doubt whether or not there is any other outlet to Lake Alexandrina than the one discovered by Captain Sturt, opening into Encounter Bay, the most certain mode of effecting which will probably be to skirt the lake itself.

"Whenever you find a good harbour you will cause the neighbouring land for a considerable distance to be carefully examined, and if the spot is well suited for the site even of a secondary town, you will direct such a survey to be made as will enable the colonial

* The Colonel, who was the son of Francis Light, "founder of Penang," had served in both army and navy with distinction, being present in forty-three actions during the Peninsular campaign.

† Major-General Sir Charles Napier was the first to be proposed as Governor of South Australia, but while declining the honour he advised the appointment of Colonel Light. Meanwhile Lord Glenelg had promised the position to Captain Hindmarsh, and Light therefore became Surveyor-General.

commissioner, if he think proper, to include the district in the lands offered for selection by the holders of the first 437 land orders. . . . You will proceed to determine which of the several sites shall be selected as that of the first town; a duty which you are hereby fully authorized and required to discharge. . . . Although the commissioners leave the decision of this important question entirely in your hands, it is their desire that should His Excellency the Governor arrive sufficiently early in the colony, you will confer with him on the subject, and pay due regard to his opinion and suggestions, without however yielding to any influence which could have the effect of divesting you in any way of the whole responsibility of the decision. . . . When you have determined the site of the first town you will proceed to lay it out. . . . You will next proceed to survey, lay out, and map the surrounding district, preparatory to the choice of rural lands."

These directions show that the position of Surveyor-General was one of extraordinary difficulty, requiring judgment, decision, tact, and untiring energy. Indeed, little wonder can be felt that despite his unflagging zeal the Colonel was unable to fulfil these multifarious duties to the satisfaction of every colonist, handicapped as he was by foul weather, conflicting reports, and lack of sufficient assistants to complete a continuous survey.

While *Light* was preparing to leave England the South Australian Company had once more displayed commendable enterprise and initiative. On February 22, 1836, they dispatched from London the *John Pirie* under Captain G. Martin, the *Duke of York* under Captain R. C. Morgan on the 24th, and on March 30 the *Lady Mary Pelham* under the command of Captain Robert Ross. Although it testified to the Company's zeal and untiring energy in colonial matters, this action really frustrated the plans of the Commissioners who had intended to have the vexed question of the capital city settled before the colonists arrived at their future home.

In the meantime the *Rapid* was being fitted out for her journey, and, in addition, the *Cygnet* had been purchased to bring out the majority of the surveying stores and three months' provisions for the *Rapid*. However, on March 20 the *Cygnet* set sail, leaving many necessary articles for which she had no space, and it so happened that the *Rapid* had not only to bring her own stores but

several "large packages" belonging to the companion vessel. On May 4, all being ready, the brig sailed from London*. On August 20 the vessel arrived safely in Nepean Bay, where the Colonel found the three ships of the South Australian Company already anchored. The Company's settlers had found much to disappoint them in the island. Realizing that, owing to the uncertainty of the position of the future capital, it was useless to build permanent homes, the pioneers had erected tents and were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the survey party.

Since the *Cygnets* had not yet reached her destination, Colonel Light determined to examine the island and the gulf while waiting for her arrival, as many of the surveyors† were in the belated vessel. The Colonel had offered some of the islanders work in connection with the survey, thus securing the services of William Cooper, native wife, and two daughters as interpreters to the aboriginal tribes.

Colonel Light spent some time in examining parts of the island, and then, having dispatched his reports to the Commissioners on the 5th, set sail on September 7 for Gulf St. Vincent. The party voyaged up the gulf, landing at intervals to examine the coast, but no discovery of importance was made until September 25. Mr. Hill, the second mate, now reported that he had seen a river of considerable size to the southward. Light left the ship, but was unfortunately unable to discover the stream; it was, however, sounded by Mr. Field, who had gone in the jolly boat to search, and on the following day was examined in more detail. "This will," says Light, "make an excellent harbour at some future period; it is sheltered from every wind. After going some distance and finding it did not accord with Captain Jones's description of the harbour he discovered, I determined on running higher up the gulf and examining this place at a future period." On the following day the head of the gulf was distinctly visible from the brig, and Light despaired of ever finding the beautiful haven mentioned by Captain

* On board were the Colonel, Messrs. Field, Pullen, and Hill, Mr. Woodforde, the surgeon, Messrs. Jacob and Cloughton, steerage passengers and crew.

† These comprised Messrs. G. S. Kingston (later Sir George Kingston), B. T. Finniss, Neale, Symonds, Hardy, and Cannan.

Jones. Mr. Field skirted the shore, but found no inlet in this vicinity, so it was decided that the ship should return to her former anchorage, while Mr. Pullen in the hatch-boat should examine the seaboard closely. Accordingly Messrs. Pullen and Cloughton set out to make a detailed inspection. Entering by a northern channel the river previously examined on the 26th, Pullen followed the course of the inlet. Field had also come in by another entrance, but, meeting him, returned to the ship. When Pullen arrived his account of the harbour differed so greatly from Jones's description that Light was extremely disappointed. However, on examining it in person on September 30, the Colonel was "very impressed with the capabilities of the place"—the Port Adelaide of to-day. Later a landing was effected, and excursions made in the neighbourhood. On inspecting the plains Colonel Light writes on October 4: "I cannot express my delight at seeing no bounds to a flat and rich looking country with abundance of fresh water lagoons. The little river* too was deep." Still he decided once more to search for Jones's port before abandoning all hope of so desirable a shelter. Accordingly the party sailed down the coast and the Onkaparinga River was examined. This attempt, however, proved unsuccessful, and Light's last hopes of discovering the elusive harbour were destroyed.

"I now felt," he says, "that no such thing could exist on this coast, at least, not as described by him." On October 11 Messrs. Morphett and Stephens arrived from the island, and from them the Colonel learned of the coming of the *Cygnets*, which had arrived at its destination on September 11. This news changed Light's plans; he decided to sail to Rapid Bay, and, landing his stores there, to dispatch the brig to the island to bring over the assistant surveyors. They might then make a survey of this neighbourhood while the Colonel examined Port Lincoln and other important harbours. On November 2, the party having arrived and the stores being landed, Light divided them once more; Mr. Kingston in the *Rapid* was to depart for Holdfast Bay, where, if the site was suitable, he was to remain, while Mr. Finnis would stay at Rapid Valley engaged in survey work.

On the 5th Mr. Kingston arrived at Glenelg, and finding an

* Patawalunga Creek.

abundant supply of fresh water, he ordered tents to be erected and stores unloaded. On the following day, accompanied by Messrs. Field, Morphett, Neale, Symonds, Thomas, and others, he started for Port Adelaide. This journey was interrupted by a stream of fresh water which lay across their route; this was the Torrens of to-day. After a vain attempt on the morrow to follow the river, the party returned, intending to start next day in a boat to locate the mouth of the newly discovered stream. The arrival of Colonel Light on the 8th, however, altered their plans, although the succeeding days were spent in energetic exploration. The Torrens was examined and its means of communication with the ocean traced, while the Sturt was followed to the gorge near O'Halloran Hill. Light had now become convinced that, "Looking generally at this place, it will be one of the largest settlements, if not the capital of the colony; the creek will be its harbour."

On December 2 the Colonel proceeded to Port Lincoln, where he arrived on the 4th. An examination of this inlet speedily confirmed his previous decision that although a valuable seaport it was not suitable as a first settlement. Many reasons combined to strengthen this view; the mouth of Spencer's Gulf was rendered dangerous to vessels by many islands and reefs*; the anchorage itself was a fine one, but difficult to navigate, while the land in the vicinity was not so rich as the country near the Torrens.

The 17th saw Light once more at Holdfast Bay, resolved that this locality was the best and, indeed, the only eligible situation for the capital city. On December 28 Governor Hindmarsh arrived, and it was decided that on the 30th he should examine the site selected. The Governor wished the capital to be moved a mile and a half nearer the sea, but Light, on discovering signs that the river evidently overflowed there, adhered to his original situation. This selection of the site was the cause of many of those unfortunate

* Light's opinion on this point was afterwards confirmed by the words of Governor Hindmarsh, "I was two nights and two days in beating out of Spencer's Gulf, which I entered without any fear. I should however be sorry to try the same navigation again until that very dangerous gulf is surveyed. . . . Gulf St. Vincent, on the contrary, appears to be perfectly clear, with regular soundings and good anchorage all over it, not one danger having yet been discovered."

misunderstandings between the Surveyor-General and some of the prominent colonists. Into these there is, however, no need to enter.

How earnestly Colonel Light endeavoured to choose a suitable locality can be seen if we study the words of Mr. B. T. Finniss, one of the original surveyors. "The settlers began to arrive in the beginning of November, 1836. Colonel Light arrived at the end of August. What did he do in these two months, a great deal of which was in tempestuous weather? He made a chart of Nepean Bay, carefully showing the reef and passage into the harbour. He completed a chart of the eastern shore of Gulf St. Vincent as high as 34 deg. 40 min., examined Port Lincoln, and ascertained all the points he wished to know, and finally so satisfied himself of the nature of the country about Port Adelaide and Mount Lofty that he staked his reputation upon the selection he made for the locality for occupation." Mr. Finniss adds, "I consider that Adelaide is the best site in the province," and indeed all the South Australians of to-day can join in paying tribute to the wisdom of Colonel Light's choice. Those who from the encircling hills have seen the Adelaide plains dotted with fertile gardens, trees, and homesteads, stretching before them, can realize the debt we owe to the prudence and foresight of the first Surveyor-General. Laying aside all controversial feelings and jealousies, no one can deny that the Colonel's choice has been a wise one, and that the "Queen City of the South" owes much to the decisive action of her founder.

CHAPTER IV

INLAND EXPLORATIONS

The problem of the capital having been finally decided and the colonists having settled in their new home, the more adventurous spirits began to penetrate the bush surrounding the small settlement. Many journeys of an exploratory character were made at this period, although mainly of minor importance. As is usually the case in a young colony these pioneers were too busy to leave records of their discoveries, and it is only in a few of the more noteworthy cases that accounts have been preserved.

While Colonel Light had been selecting the site an event had occurred which illustrated clearly the necessity for caution on the part of the settlers. When the *Africaine* was nearing its destination some of the passengers had asked Captain Duff to set them ashore, thinking that they could enjoy a pleasant journey overland to Nepean Bay. Relying on Captain Sutherland's account of the island, and neglecting to take into account the years that had elapsed since his visit, they were unprepared for the hardships which confronted them. These proved well-nigh insurmountable, and although the majority of the party reached Kingscote after a severe struggle, Dr. Slater and Mr. Osborne perished of privation by the way.

Undeterred, however, by this sad catastrophe, which cast a gloom over the young State, other colonists ventured into the wilderness on journeys, which proved of value in exploration.

One of such expeditions was that made by Mr. Alford*, of the Police Force, in pursuit of Morgan, who was implicated in the

* Together with Messrs. Hateley and Anderson in 1838.

attempt upon Sheriff Smart*. Through the wiliness of their captives† they were led astray into an unexplored region in the neighbourhood of Mount Magnificent, and it was only after an arduous journey that Adelaide was safely reached‡. In April of the previous year Mr. Alford|| had made a trip to the south, but turned back on reaching the horseshoe of the Onkaparinga. In the same month a party under Mr. Finnis had been sent to survey districts outside Adelaide: their exploration extended to Mudla Wirra Forest and their discoveries included the Para and Light Rivers, Lyndoch and Happy Valleys, and Noarlunga.

The examination of country lands was now steadily proceeded with: "a rough topographical survey," says Mr. B. T. Finnis, "carried on to inform Colonel Light of the nature of the country." On May 12, 1838, some country land was ready for selection, while good reports of the surrounding districts were coming to hand frequently.

In 1837, with Messrs. Fisher and Morphet, Colonel Light set out on June 14 on an expedition of discovery. Mr. Stephen Hack joined them at Glenelg. They turned southwards; fertile and well-watered land was traversed, but on arriving at Willunga the party decided to return to the capital. Meanwhile an easy route had been found to the summit of Mount Lofty by Mr. Young Bingham Hutchinson, who, after two unsuccessful attempts, had discovered a suitable ascent. Shortly afterwards another trip was also made by Colonel Light, on this occasion accompanied by Mr.

* Three of the "Van Demonians," as the criminal classes were called, attacked the sheriff's hut. Magee, who fired at Mr. Smart, was afterwards hanged for his crime.

† Morgan, who was afterwards notorious as a bushranger, was captured between Mr. Hack's and Mr. Wright's whaling stations by the aid of a runaway lifer.

‡ When Mount Magnificent was reached it was discovered that food for two days only was remaining, and, Morgan stubbornly refusing to proceed, they were forced to fasten him to a tree, and push on for Adelaide. At the Onkaparinga the party were fortunately able to secure provisions from a land selector, and reached the capital. Some of the police were then dispatched to secure Morgan.

|| Alford was accompanied by Mr. C. W. Stuart, overseer of stock, and Mr. Allen, of Botanical Gardens. They were in search of the only two horses then in the colony, the animals having strayed away; their pursuit was, however, unavailing.

J. H. Fisher, Commissioner of Crown Lands, he made an overland expedition to Encounter Bay in order to settle a dispute between Captain Blenkinsop and Mr. Stephens concerning the fisheries there. Both gentlemen, in an account published in August, were very enthusiastic concerning the good land passed and the abundant supply of water bordering the route.

Meanwhile much valuable work of an exploratory character was being done by Mr. J. Menge, who has earned by his untiring efforts the title of "Father of South Australian Mineralogy." Mr. Menge had been connected with the South Australian Company, but, resigning from its employ, he devoted his energies to discovery in the young settlement. A few weeks after the first landing a party of twenty had made a trip to the mainland to gain an idea of the general character of the country. They landed in the neighbourhood of Cape Jervis, and "Professor" Menge then expressed his opinion that these ranges were highly metalliferous. He also thoroughly examined Kangaroo Island, and made many excursions on the mainland: unfortunately no detailed account of his wanderings appears to have been preserved, and, although much can be gleaned from his geological notes, it is not possible to arrange his discoveries in a strictly chronological order; we know, however, that he explored and examined scientifically the country around Mount Lofty, Mount Barker, and the Onkaparinga, speaking in enthusiastic terms of its fertility. He traced the Para to its source, and discovered and named the Rhine River, while Menge's Island, near Lyndoch Valley, testifies to his residence there. It is thought that during his rambles, which often lasted for weeks and even months, he discovered and named such places as Belvidere Range, the Broken, Hawdon Range, Rhine Valley, German Pass, Rowland's Creek, Flaxman Valley, and many others as well. Mr. Menge was quick to realize the mineral riches of the State, but the pioneers sought their wealth in pastoral pursuits, and his praise of rich country was more welcome to the early settlers than his descriptions of mineral deposits.

In his account of the ascent of Mount Lofty Mr. Hutchinson had regretted the fact that no one had as yet travelled overland from Adelaide to Lake Alexandrina. His complaint may have aroused interest in the matter, for on December 25, 1837, an expedi-

tion left Adelaide bound for the lake. Mr. Robert Cock, an auctioneer and appraiser, Pastor Finlayson, and Messrs. G. Barton and A. Wyatt composed the party, taking with them provisions for eight days. Passing Cock's* Creek, the travellers pushed on to Mount Barker, where, on ascending the mountain, a good view of the neighbourhood was obtained. After they left this vicinity a stream was discovered, and as the following day was the anniversary of the Governor's arrival, it was named in honour of his Excellency. This name has since been altered to the Bremer, as confusion was likely to occur when two Hindmarsh Rivers were in existence. On the 31st the shores of the lake were reached, then, turning homewards, the travellers journeyed north-west. A second river was now passed and called the Angas†; then crossing the Mount Lofty Ranges, the party reached Adelaide on New Year's Day.

Inspired no doubt by this example, other adventurous colonists now visited this locality, amongst them being Dr. Imlay and Mr. Hill, who left Adelaide on a trip to the Murray on January 23, 1838. These travellers made no discoveries of importance, nor did better fortune attend the party which left Adelaide on March 1 for the same neighbourhood‡. This band consisted of Messrs. Hill, Oakden, Wood, and Willis, who had "a most arduous journey of twelve days" owing to lack of water and unpleasant weather.

Many of the colonists were now engaged in active exploratory work, showing an eagerness and enterprise that were highly commendable. The majority of their discoveries were of little value to the State, and in many cases have not been recorded, yet some of their journeys, though of minor importance, are of sufficient interest to deserve mention. Such was an attempt by Mr. Stephen Hack to discover an easier route to Encounter Bay. This was unsuccessful, and he expressed the opinion that the best and, indeed, only means of communication with the lake was the Onkaparinga route. Amongst these colonist explorers we must also number

* Now known as Cox's Creek.

† In honour of the Chairman of the South Australian Company.

‡ Detailed accounts of these three expeditions can be found in the Appendix to James's "Six Months in South Australia." See also "South Australian Record," Vol. I.

Robert Cock, who made many expeditions into the bush. He had already visited the Murray, and in June was successful in discovering an easy route across Mount Lofty to the River Angas, giving facilities for communication with the country around Mount Barker. Nor, as we shall see, were his energies confined to the Adelaide district alone.

Other pioneers, too, had engaged in exploring expeditions, among them being Messrs. T. Bewes Strangways and Stephen Blunden: their journey, although of short duration, was responsible for the opening up of some useful and rich country. Leaving Adelaide on November 22 with provisions for six days, they followed the Torrens to its source, which proved to be a curious spring named by the travellers Davy's Punchbowl. Pushing on, they discovered and named the River Gawler, sometimes known as the North Para; then crossing it they proceeded to the Hummock Hills. These were climbed, and fine pastoral land could be seen. As this was the object of their expedition they now returned to Adelaide to secure rich tracts in this neighbourhood.

Early in the following year Mr. Strangways made another trip in this vicinity, when with Messrs. Geo. M. Stephen and Nation he left Adelaide in search of rich country. Crossing the Lower Para they reached the Gawler River just below its junction with the Upper Para; then as they followed the stream fertile alluvial plains were discovered covering in extent hundreds of acres. The party now came upon a salt water creek, which was named after Strange, their attendant, who had discovered it two years previously when engaged as a fisherman. So promising was the neighbouring district that Mr. Stephen obtained a special survey.

CHAPTER V

FURTHER AFIELD

The energies of these pioneer explorers were not, however, confined to the neighbourhood of the capital, for many pushed inland into the unsettled wilderness. Yorke Peninsula was visited and examined, while the West Coast attracted much attention. Good reports of the country surrounding Port Lincoln had been received from Captain Philip Mitchell (of the ill-fated *Tam o'Shanter*), who had visited the harbour; indeed, it is largely due to his glowing descriptions that public attention was directed to this fine anchorage. Much interest was now felt in the Port Lincoln district, and settlement in this locality proceeded rapidly. We hear many accounts, mostly enthusiastic, of the progress of the neighbourhood, while numerous discoveries of varying importance are recorded by the colonists.

On March 11, 1839, Mr. Robert Tod had left Adelaide for Port Lincoln, and shortly after his arrival at the harbour departed on an exploratory trip inland, accompanied by several friends*. Fertile and well-grassed tracts were traversed by the party, who were sufficiently fortunate in addition to discover a fine fresh-water stream, the Tod. A high mountain was also reached, and this, being a conspicuous landmark, was named Mount Gawler in honour of His Excellency. A beautiful valley extended to the base of the hill, and on this the name of Cowan Vale was bestowed. Provisions now proved to be nearly exhausted and a return to the port was necessary.

Although Mr. Tod was unable to push farther inland or to examine in more detail the country he had entered, others speedily

*The party consisted of Messrs. Tod, Austin, Crouch, Fenn, Phillipson, and Williams.

followed his example and visited the country. Amongst these was Mr. Dutton, who joined an expedition* to penetrate the interior. These explorers discovered Mount Dutton and Hawson or (as it is called to-day) Marble Range, thence passing Coffin's Bay and proceeding to Mount Gawler.

Here, however, the trip was brought to an abrupt termination owing to a scarcity of supplies, the party being forced to turn homeward. October, however, witnessed another expedition, which proved more successful than those of the preceding parties had been. On the 17th a band of colonists under the leadership of Captain Hawson left Happy Valley and journeyed inland. Passing Cowan Vale they reached Smith's Valley; here the party entered a fertile district, richer in soil and larger in extent than any tract previously seen. This was named Rossiter Vale in honour of Captain Rossiter, who afterwards won fame as the rescuer of Eyre, while the stream which flowed through the valley received the name of his vessel, the *Mississippi*†. During the journey the travellers did not, according to Captain Hawson, "see five miles of unavailable land, nor did they ride two hours without water." This is, indeed, a testimony to the pastoral value of the country traversed by the party.

Not only were explorers pushing inland, but also voyages had been made along the shores to examine the seaboard‡ and discover the value of the coastal land. Such was the examination of the West Coast made by Captain Lees, of the *Nereus*, in March, 1839. Sailing for Coffin's Bay the captain arrived at his destination on the 11th. Here Mount Prospect was named; then he steered for Point

* These travellers were Captain Hawson and Messrs. Dutton, Mitchell, Dennis, Wybell, Harrison, and T. Hawson.

† This vessel was the first foreign ship to enter the port since its settlement.

‡ In July, 1840, a fine harbour was discovered by Mr. Germein, of the Pilot Service, in the *Waterwitch*. This port, which had been treated as of no importance on Flinders' chart, received the name of Germein Roads. In 1846 it was, however, examined by Mr. Thomson, of the *John Pirie*, and then received its present name of Port Pirie. On reporting this event the editor of the "*South Australian*" says, "The discovery of this harbour is manifestly of the greatest importance to the stockholders to the north and to the colonists generally. It has already afforded, and is now affording, great facility to the shipment of stock from the neighbouring country to Port Lincoln."

Weyland, where a landing was effected and a short trip inland undertaken by members of the party. Cape Radstock was next visited, but no important openings in the coast were discovered, nor could any traces of a large river be seen; so, becoming convinced of the futility of further search, the captain returned to Adelaide. Mr. Samuel Stephens, who accompanied Captain Lees, speaks in a somewhat pessimistic vein of the country passed; the coastal land is, he says, "almost useless," and he appears to have but faint hopes of better conditions prevailing inland.

In August of the same year Mr. John Hill also examined the coastline from Streaky to Denial Bay, and he, too, describes the country as deceptive in appearance, regarding it as inferior land, likely to prove of but little value.

Meanwhile several settlements had been made on Yorke Peninsula, and the country was being eagerly examined by colonists. Chief among these pioneers must be numbered Mr. Robert Cock, whose energy in exploratory work seems to have been well-nigh inexhaustible. In 1838 we hear of an expedition in this neighbourhood made by Cock in company with a Mr. Jameson. An account of the general appearance of the peninsula was given by the travellers, who named several places, including Pelican Shoal and Deception Bay. On May 19 Mr. Cock once more set forth in company with Mr. James Hughes and others for Port Vincent. Landing here the party proceeded overland to the Port Victoria survey, and spent two days in examining the harbour. In April of the following year Mr. Cock left under instructions from the Adelaide Survey Association to examine the peninsula. In the Victoria, under Captain Hutchinson, he sailed to Point Riley. On landing here, however, Mr. Cock found the country was so unfavourable that, leaving this neighbourhood, he proceeded further north along the shores of the gulf. Arriving off Mount Arden, he made a second trip ashore, but this region too proved inhospitable. Then, returning to the ship, he sailed to the head of the gulf, still finding barren land. Hence the party returned to Port Lincoln, and Mr. Cock, in company with Mr. Hughes, made an excursion overland to Coffin's Bay. In August Mr. Cock also paid another visit to this neighbourhood; indeed his enthusiasm contributed largely to the increase of interest felt in this district, for without his energetic explorations little information would have been obtained concerning the locality.

In the same year, also, an expedition was undertaken which, apart from the discoveries made by the explorers, possessed an intense though tragic interest for the people of South Australia. Governor Gawler, who had always consistently endeavoured to promote the welfare of the colonists, believed that an excursion following the banks of the Murray would prove of great value. Not only could the lake be cursorily examined and the alluvial flats inspected, but it was hoped that by penetrating the interior from the North-West Bend fertile tracts of country would be traversed. Early in November, 1839, therefore, the Colonel commenced preparations, and as the voyage up the river seemed likely to prove pleasurable the party* included Miss Gawler and Mrs. Sturt. The uncertainty of the weather, however, prevented a speedy departure, so that it was not until November 22 that a start was made. Willunga was reached at 10 a.m. and the travellers arrived at Currency Creek in the afternoon. Although Mr. Pullen had completed all preparatory arrangements it was not until the 26th that the boats were ready for the voyage. Then, the party having embarked, the little fleet passed the Finnis at 1 o'clock, and the camp for the night was erected on Western Point. On the 27th a fresh start was made, but as progress proved slow the Elbow was not reached until December 10. Being provided with Captain Sturt's chart of the river, the travellers were able to recognize the different landmarks passed, and spent an enjoyable time during the voyage.

On arrival at the Great Bend the party subdivided. The Governor, with Captain Sturt and Mr. Inman, accompanied by one of the police force and an attendant, were to journey to the north. Mr. Bryan, however, with the adventurous spirit natural to youth, pleaded to be permitted to accompany the explorers, and was accordingly allowed to go in the place of Freestone, the policeman. Provisions for a week were taken, and on the 10th the camp was left. After the party had travelled for five miles a lofty hill was sighted, which received the name of Mount Bryan. A succession of sandy plains, dotted with stunted and scattered trees, then intervened,

* Captain Sturt, Assistant-Commissioner, Mr. Inman, Chief of Police, and Messrs. Gell and Bryan, "of His Excellency's household," were included in the expedition.

and no water being obtainable along the route, were only traversed with great difficulty. At midday on the 12th the travellers observed what were apparently lofty forests and fertile, wooded hills. This aroused hopes of a favourable change in the structure of the country. On riding to the summit of a small range to the westward, however, Colonel Gawler became aware that they had been the victims of a mirage, for the illusion disappeared and it was seen that level and seemingly waterless plains extended to the base of the distant mountains. The Governor therefore kindled a signal fire, and the party, arriving greatly fatigued, encamped for the night.

The situation of the explorers was now extremely critical, for scarcely a drop of water remained, while the prospect of discovering a further supply seemed remote. Two signal fires having been noticed on Mount Bryan a little before sunset, Captain Sturt and Mr. Inman volunteered to go thither in search of water. Fearing they might be placed in a perilous position, Colonel Gawler decided that it would be best for the whole party to journey to the mount. On arrival at the hill, however, a close inspection showed that the only water-courses on the mountain had been dried by the summer heat. "There can be doubt," says Sturt, "as to the prudence of the night march to Mount Bryan under the apparent certainty of finding water in the hills, but the disappointment was ruin. . . . There was not a moment to continue the search for water and to walk the mountains under such awful heat was impossible."

The horses were then tethered, and, as the Governor was suffering severely from privation, the travellers rested until sunset. At five o'clock Colonel Gawler decided to precede the party to camp, as he foresaw the difficulty that would be experienced in reaching the Murray and was anxious to dispatch relief. At 6 p.m. he left the mount in company with Mr. Bryan, and an hour later the rest of the explorers also departed. At four in the morning the Governor's tracks were seen; the heat now became almost insupportable, the endurance of the little band being taxed to the utmost. At noon a short halt was made, and at three o'clock they were compelled to rest once more. Realizing that some aid was necessary if the party were to proceed, Captain Sturt ordered one of the horses to be killed, and the travellers partook of its blood. The following morning, to their intense delight, the river was reached, and shortly after their arrival Colonel Gawler appeared.

His Excellency stated that about seven o'clock in the morning they had journeyed within twelve miles of the tents, when, as his horse was unable to proceed quickly, Mr. Bryan had offered to ride it into camp slowly, allowing the Governor to have his animal, which was in better condition. Not suspecting any ill results from this arrangement, Colonel Gawler consented, and, leaving instructions with Mr. Bryan as to the route to be pursued, he journeyed to camp.

Although no doubt was felt concerning his ability to reach the river, Messrs. Gell and Pullen, with Bob, an Encounter Bay black, were sent to assist Mr. Bryan. In the afternoon they returned, however, having been unsuccessful in their search. With fresh orders from the Governor they again set out, and a boat was also dispatched to watch the banks for traces of the absent traveller. This attempt proved futile, and despite the frantic efforts of the explorers the missing man could not be discovered*. Mr. Bryan's blankets and other equipment were found with a note stating that he had gone to the south south-east. By parting with his horse, however, the unfortunate explorer "had deprived his pursuers of all hope of success." Unable to follow his tracks, the party now travelled in the same direction, examining the bush thoroughly, but all to no avail.

Although little hope remained, the Governor was still unwilling to leave the Elbow, and abandon the attempt to discover the missing traveller. The scarcity of provisions, however, rendered departure necessary, and on the 21st the party were compelled to commence the homeward journey. "Eight days," writes Captain Sturt, "had now elapsed since Mr. Bryan's loss. It was with deep concern that the search for him, even under the last hopeless circumstance, was relinquished, for Mr. Bryan, who was well known to His Excellency, had endeared himself to all by his kindness and attention."

It was, however, now certain that no hope of his discovery existed, and the party reluctantly turned homewards, convinced of the futility of further efforts.

* No traces of Mr. Bryan's remains have ever been found.

CHAPTER VI

THE OVERLANDERS

With the progress of the Australian colonies the problem of provisions naturally arose, the young States requiring amongst other necessities regular supplies of fresh meat to provide for their wants. While game could be obtained in the dense bush surrounding the recent settlements, this source was by no means certain, and with the growth of population and subsequent inroads into the wilderness the supply became totally inadequate. Nor indeed could the early colonists always raise sufficient herds for their own consumption, and it therefore became necessary to rely on outside assistance in securing stores.

This demand gave scope for the rise of a class of men whose occupation was to convey stock from market to market, colony to colony. These were usually descendants of good families who, finding a peculiar fascination in the excitement of a drover's life, combined pleasure and profit in this manner. The first of these adventurous spirits had journeyed from Port Phillip to Sydney, thus establishing a base from which later operations could be extended. With the foundation of the South Australian province a new field was opened for these travellers, for if stock could be successfully driven overland to Adelaide a promising market would be available; it remained to be seen if such a course would prove practicable.

In 1838 the first of these overlanders (as they were now called) determined to attempt the journey to South Australia. Mr. Joseph Hawdon,* who had been a settler in New South Wales since 1834, resolved to travel to Adelaide with a mob of three hundred cattle.

* Mr. Hawdon was a member of the first party to successfully bring cattle from New South Wales to Port Phillip overland.

He was assisted in this hazardous undertaking by Mr. Charles Bonney, and with a party of seven others left the Goulburn River on January 23. The route which he intended to follow lay along this stream, passing thence to Yarrayne*. Two reasons caused the travellers to be specially desirous of avoiding the Murray: the hostility of the natives and the danger of watering stock at so large a river.

At the beginning of their expedition the party were handicapped heavily by the atmospheric conditions. The high temperature prevailing was extremely trying, while on the second day of the journey a scorching gale made progress impossible, the heat becoming so intense that one of the men was temporarily blinded. This weather was followed by a most dangerous thunderstorm; the lightning played continuously, three of the cattle were killed, and the men felt ill effects from the storm.

Despite these unpleasant conditions the party pushed on and, following the Goulburn, discovered the junction of the Hume†. Three days later Major Mitchell's tracks to the south were seen, and it was now discovered that the supposed junction at Swan Hill was merely a branch of the Hume, which, sweeping out, rejoined the main channel. As there was no water obtainable in the flat country to the west, the drovers followed the Yarrayne, which took them nearly to the banks of the Hume. The junction with the Murrumbidgee was then passed, and the party skirted the south bank of the Murray to within three miles of the Darling, which they forded.‡

The travellers were now entering totally unexplored country, and some anxiety was felt as to the attitude of the aborigines. On March 2 a tribe was met which evinced a hostile disposition, but neighbouring natives proved "more friendly and, indeed, in some cases became too familiar." On the 4th a beautiful lake of thirty or forty miles circumference was discovered by Hawdon and named in honour of Queen Victoria. "Each member of the party," says the leader, "testified his loyal respect by drinking Her Majesty's health, following the toast with loud and hearty huzzas." Jour-

* Called by Mr. Hawdon the Yarrane.

† The Murray.

‡ At the junction of the Murray and Darling the party discovered the bottle buried by Major Mitchell on June 20, 1836.

moving onwards the travellers on the 12th reached another lake which, although already rejoicing in the native name of Nookamka, was called by the overlanders Lake Bonney; they desired, says Hawdon, "to show their appreciation of his (Bonney's) assistance and acknowledge how largely his company had contributed to the pleasure of the expedition."

They were now approaching the Elbow of the Murray, and evidence was seen of the recent visit of an exploratory party to the river. The natives informed Hawdon that four Europeans had been searching for the Murray a short time previously. On March 20 the overlanders left the river banks and, crossing a tract of rough country, arrived in the vicinity of Mount Barker. "We halted," says Hawdon, "to dine at a creek of excellent water with most luxuriant grass growing in the valley. The creek is immediately on the west side of Mount Barker, to the top of which I rode and had a most magnificent view of the beautiful country around." After admiring the surrounding land, which was extremely fertile and well-watered, the travellers "commenced their ascent up one of the steepest and most scrubby mountains that our drays passed over, and having accomplished the Herculean task, kept along the leading range to the south-west termination."

On April 1 the Onkaparinga banks were reached, but the explorers kept too far south and missed the more direct route to Adelaide. When nearing Noarlunga the drovers were fortunate in meeting several kangaroo hunters. It appears that, owing to a shortage of the meat supply, they had left the capital to secure fresh provisions; the arrival of the party was therefore most opportune, and a public dinner* was given in honour of Mr. Hawdon's enterprise and courage. It is interesting to learn that the adventurous drovers brought their cattle to Adelaide in excellent condition and that only four head had been lost en route.

The success of this venture encouraged others to face the hardships of the journey in hopes of financial gain. Among these overlanders was numbered Edward John Eyre, afterwards famous for his intrepid daring in exploratory expeditions. Early in November, 1837, Eyre had left Sydney to select suitable cattle, although

* Mr. James Hurtle Fisher presided and ninety colonists attended. An ox from the overland herd was roasted whole for all-comers.

it was not until February 9, 1838, that the party left Port Phillip. It was their intention to strike across the interior and avoid following the Murray. Crossing Mount Alexander, therefore, the travellers passed through one hundred and fifty miles of good country before the water supply began to fail. As they were now unable to locate the Yarrayne Eyre decided to trace the Wimmera, thinking it must prove to be identical with Sturt's Lindesay.* Following this river from the point where Mitchell had left it, the explorer discovered that it emptied its waters into what he now named Lake Hindmarsh.† No other watercourses were discernible in this vicinity, and Eyre therefore, with two companions endeavoured to penetrate the scrub in hopes of finding either the Murray or Lindesay. After an arduous journey of one hundred miles, since it was found impossible to proceed further, they were forced to return on foot. No other course was now open save to follow Hawdon's route, and, travelling in his tracks, the overlanders were successful in reaching Adelaide.

Among those who accomplished the overland journey in 1838 was another celebrated explorer, Captain Sturt, who was destined to become still more famous in the history of South Australian discovery. The leader had in company with Captain Finnis, Messrs. McLeod, G. Strangways and others, traced the Hume‡ to a short distance above its junction with the Goulburn. Then he had followed the track of Eyre and Hawdon, the only difference in his route being that he crossed below the junction of the Murray and the Darling, and not above as his predecessors had done. On nearing Adelaide the party received a hearty welcome from Messrs. Eyre and Cock, who travelled to meet them.

Hitherto all overlanders had followed the line of communication opened up by the journey of Mr. Hawdon. It was felt, however, that this track, while avoiding any danger from scarcity of water or lack of feed, demanded an unnecessary expenditure of time upon the journey, and that a more direct route might be discovered which would obviate this delay. Mr. Charles Bonney||, who had

* Eyre spells it "Lindsay."

† After the Governor of South Australia.

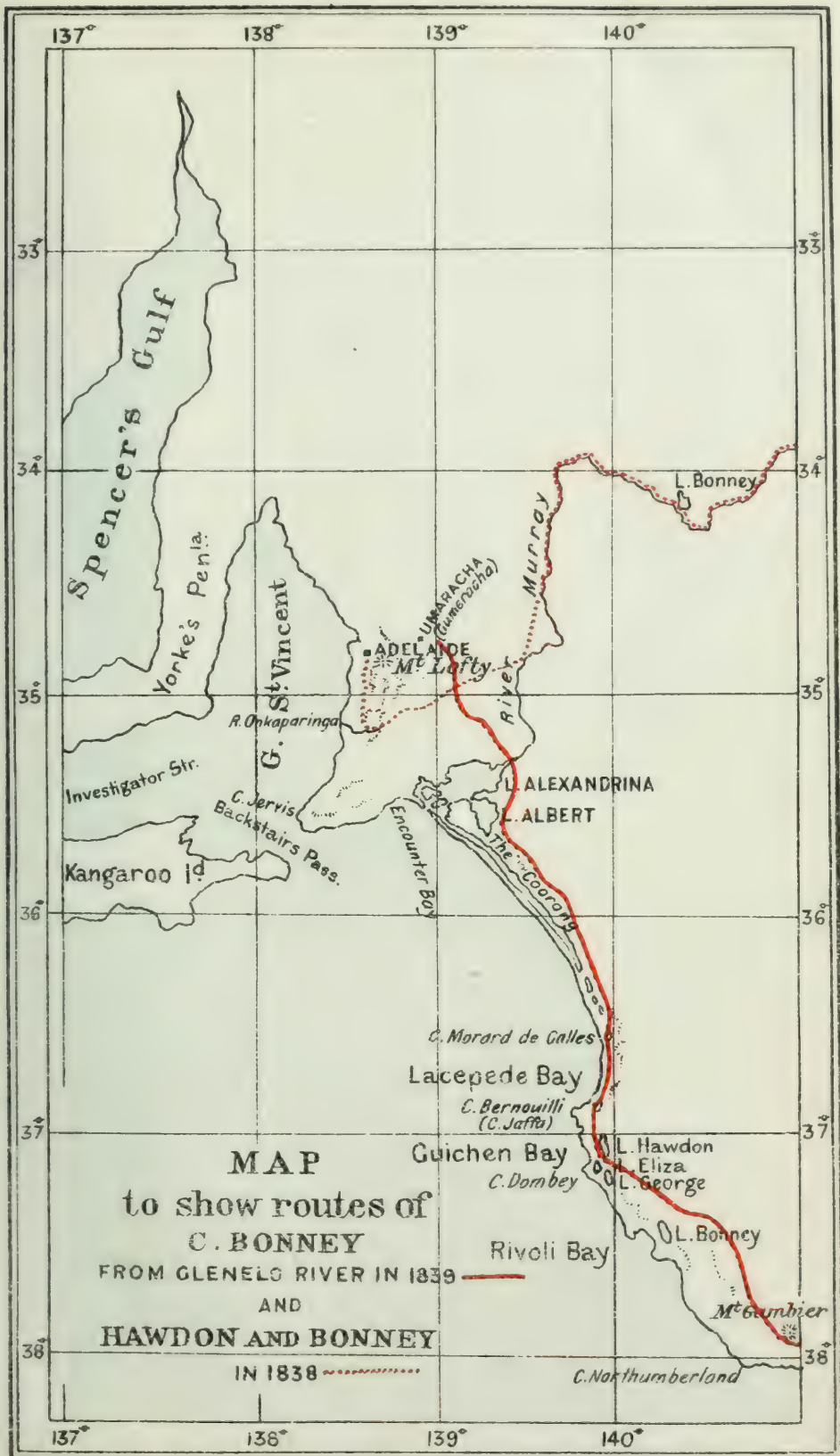
‡ The Murray.

|| Mr. Bonney, who had arrived in Sydney, December 12, 1834, had also assisted Mr. Ebden in discovering a route for cattle from his station on the Murray (near Albury) to Port Phillip.

born a member of the first overland party now determined to make an attempt to discover an easier and quicker path of communication with South Australia. Accordingly on March 18, 1839, he left Mr. Henty's station on the Glenelg, accompanied by ten drovers, with three hundred head of cattle. Starting from the junction of the Wannon and Glenelg Mr. Bonney directed his course to the westward, but soon discovered on crossing the Glenelg that he would be entering a sandy and desolate tract. He therefore turned south-west, passing through a most singular belt of country consisting of marshes and sheoak scrub. Expecting this to continue, Bonney directed his course to the north-west, but finding the swamps failing to supply sufficient water for his needs, turned towards the coast and was soon successful in discovering extensive marshes running parallel with the shore. On the following day he discovered a freshwater lake, which was named in honour of Mr. Joseph Hawdon. Now a belt of dense scrub intervened, and passing this the travellers found that the swamps were barely a foot deep. On the next day the coast was unexpectedly reached at Lacépède Bay, and, the cattle being in want of water, wells were dug in the sandhills and the stock allowed to rest.

Here the weather suddenly changing from sultry and oppressive to cold and showery, Mr. Bonney determined to make an attempt to cross the one hundred miles of country still intervening between his present position and the most easterly point of Lake Alexandrina. Owing to the cool weather and the abundance of grass along the route the stock were able to travel without water for three days. On the fourth, however, being still fifty miles from the lake, the party entered a region consisting of sandhills, intersected by narrow swamps containing water too brackish for human consumption, although capable of being used for watering the stock. The lake was still forty-five miles distant, but the overlanders hoped to be able to reach it without any serious difficulty.

The weather now became extremely oppressive and the heat so intense that little progress could be made against these adverse conditions. On the following day several of the animals collapsed and it was found necessary to divide the party. Bonney with four men and two native boys would push on towards the lake with the main herd, while the weakly cattle were to be taken back to



Adapted from large map supplied by the late Mr C. H. Harris of the Survey Dept.

the last waterhole to rest. Starting by moonlight the larger party traversed a barren and sandy tract, but were then compelled to rest for the day. During this enforced idleness Mr. Bonney walked to a high sandhill whence he observed what appeared to be a body of water about ten miles distant to the west. In the evening the travellers journeyed westward, but no water proved visible, and a change of direction to the north-west was necessary. Although compelled by extreme exhaustion to rest every two miles, the party still struggled on. In a few hours a timbered ridge was noticed in the distance, and what was still more pleasing numerous native fires were seen telling of proximity to the lake.

The travellers were now forced to journey on foot, as their horses could scarcely stand; then, one of the men becoming too ill to proceed, a halt was made until evening upon a sandy plain without shelter of any description. Towards evening, as the men were suffering agonies from lack of water, Mr. Bonney directed that a calf should be killed in the hopes that its blood would quench their thirst. While the drovers were resting the cattle were observed to be wandering in the direction of the lake, so, collecting their horses, the party followed. The animals had evidently detected the presence of water, although nine miles distant, and were only overtaken when within half a mile of the shores.

Thus, after a nineteen days' journey against very adverse conditions, the overlanders reached what Governor Gawler afterwards named Lake Albert.* The herd was then driven towards Adelaide, and, good pasturage being found near the Gumeracha of to-day, they were allowed to graze in this district.

This journey proved of great importance in the history of overland enterprise, for the discovery of this route resulted in a great saving of time and energy. A trip following the new track would only occupy a quarter of the period needed if the old path were followed. Not only did this encourage the cattle industry, but it also caused more attention to be bestowed upon the south-east portion of our province, having an important and beneficial effect upon the exploration and settlement of this district. A glance at a map of this locality will remind us of Bonney's adventurous spirit: Lake Hawdon, Mount Muirhead and Mount Benson all mark his route from the eastern State.

* In honour of the Prince Consort.

Meanwhile a new departure had been made by E. J. Eyre, who had travelled overland with six hundred cattle and in addition a flock of sheep. He demonstrated that sheep could be successfully brought to Adelaide, indeed, experience seemed to prove that they would be less troublesome than the cattle on the journey. The overland expedition had now become a regular and established enterprise, and the roll of travellers included such names as Messrs. E. P. Sturt, MacLeod, Luit, Field, MacPherson,* Pullen, Langhorne, and Inman, Lieutenant Mundy,† Dr. Sherwin, Captain Hart, and others.

Although the early overlanders had been successful in avoiding collision with the natives, subsequent parties were not so fortunate, and several barbarous murders bear witness to the dangers attendant on such journeys. The blacks had, unfortunately, acquired a taste for mutton, which they took every opportunity to gratify. Not only, then, must the drovers be constantly on the alert to prevent theft, but also they must be continually guarding against attack from the savages. Sometimes recent outrages would so arouse public indignation that a detachment of police would be dispatched to deal with the offenders: this was easier in theory than practice, for added to the impossibility of distinguishing who were the criminals was the difficulty of finding any natives at all. Judging doubtless that discretion would prove the better part of valour, the tribes along the route would mysteriously disappear. Thus if one is tempted to wonder what punishment was meted out to the erring blacks it is well to remember that before you can chastise him you must first secure your transgressor.

Such a punitive expedition was the one dispatched under Major Thomas O'Halloran in May, 1841, to wreak justice upon the natives concerned in the attacks upon Messrs. Field and Inman, and to recover the sheep stolen from these overlanders. The party, which consisted of sixty-nine Europeans and two natives, proceeded via Deadman's, Wallaby, and Pine Flats‡ to Lake Bonney. Thence

* Mr. Huntley MacPherson made a trip with Mr. Charles Bonney from Adelaide to Port Phillip. See "Register," July 3rd, 1841.

† Lieutenant Mundy and Mr. Joseph Hawdon drove tandem from Port Phillip to Adelaide. For record of journey see "South Australian Almanac," 1840, pp. 170-171.

‡ These features were named by Major O'Halloran.

they pushed on to what Major O'Halloran very appropriately called Hornet's Nest. All along the line of march the police had discovered remains of sheep, which, according to the aboriginals, could not be "jumbuck," but merely native dog. At Hornet's Nest, however, two hundred carcasses were discovered which were most unmistakably mutton, but the "innocent" blacks had judged it wisest to vanish.

Here the expedition halted and a fortified camp was erected. Then, having learnt from Mr. Langhorne of the attack* upon his party, the Major set out for the Rufus, the scene of the outrage. The police were, however, forced to return to Adelaide without fulfilling either of their aims, a fact which was due not to any negligence on their part, but to the difficulty of the task before them. Other punitive expeditions were dispatched, among them being the force under Tolmer, sent to search for Mr. Dutton's party from Port Lincoln. Owing to a disagreement between the volunteers and Inspector Tolmer, Mr. Eyre assumed the leadership, but even under such able guidance the party accomplished little.

In a history of discovery and settlement due value must be given to the journeyings of the overlanders. It is true that they preferred to follow one of the two well-known routes, yet their trips did much to open up the country along the line of march, and what is even more important, connected South Australia with the neighbouring State. Later still, when Port Lincoln was settled and showed signs of increasing prosperity, many overlanders found fresh employment by taking stock thither; journeys, too, were made to the westward by the drovers. It would be hard to estimate accurately how many of the South Australian exploratory trips owed their origin to questions connected with cattle. Not only would drovers make explorations along their routes, but also many journeys were undertaken solely to find good pasturage or to discover an easy path for driving stock from market to market. Indeed, in the early years of our province the majority and, in fact, one might say, all the expeditions undertaken were due to a desire to find profitable pastoral country and suitable sites for stations.

*On June 20, after crossing Lake Victoria, these overlanders had been savagely attacked by five hundred blacks, who had killed four of the overlanders and wounded two others.

CHAPTER VII

THE MURRAY MOUTH CONTROVERSY

To a country possessing so few watercourses of any magnitude the importance of such a river as the Murray cannot be overestimated. It appeared, therefore, to the early settlers that this stream must prove their richest possession and that, if navigable, it would afford excellent opportunities for extensive trading operations. The problem, then, which for many years absorbed much public attention and interest was the navigability of the Murray entrance, a question which, despite repeated efforts, was not finally settled until 1853.

When Captain Sturt had first visited the outlet from Lake Alexandrina he had foreseen future difficulties, for it seemed to him that there could be no "practicable communication between the lake and sea." The next expedition to this locality was under the leadership of Captain Barker, and the tragedy which terminated it so abruptly prevented much heed being paid to the surrounding district. Thus for a few years little attention was bestowed upon the Murray mouth. It was not, indeed, until 1836, when the problem of selecting a suitable site for the capital arose, that Encounter Bay came once more into public notice. Many of those who objected to the position of Adelaide urged that a city near the channel from the lake would possess "highly superior commercial advantages." Colonel Light, on the other hand, was more inclined to share Captain Sturt's opinion of this vicinity. "I saw the coast from the sea," he says, "and its low sandy appearance, with its exposure to the whole Southern Ocean, was a sufficient warning of the danger that must attend the approach to it. Everyone accustomed to the making of land must know how difficult, I may say how impossible, after a long passage, it is to make exactly the

mouth of a river on a low sandy coast where there are no landmarks; in this case there is no trifling on the coast to the eastward of Encounter Bay; besides which a high surf must always be a great impediment to the navigable purposes desired."

When Adelaide had been definitely fixed on as the capital of the young colony and the pioneers had settled in their new homes, men's thoughts turned once more to the Murray and its outlet. A desire was prevalent at the time for information concerning Lake Alexandrina, but special anxiety was felt over the problem of the river mouth. An expedition was therefore dispatched from Adelaide to examine the lake and discover if Sturt's Channel was the only means of communication with the ocean. Mr. Young Bingham Hutchinson and Mr. T. Bewes Strangways were the leaders of the party which left in November, 1837, for Encounter Bay. Crossing the Mount Lofty Ranges, they arrived on December 1 at Captain Blenkinsop's fishery, where they awaited the return of the owner, who was absent. On his arrival every assistance was offered to the travellers, for the captain provided a whale-boat and crew of six men to assist the explorers in entering the lake.

The boat party then set off on December 4, intending to try the entrance from the sea; the remainder, ten in number, including two natives, drove in the cart over the undulating country to the nearest part of the channel. At noon the travellers halted and the cart was abandoned for a short time while they proceeded on horseback to the channel. Arriving here they knew by a flag on the inside of the bar that the boat had successfully entered. The course of the channel was now traced, some of the party using the boat, while others in the cart examined its banks. After four miles their way was barred by a small stream, Currency Creek,* which was followed to its source; the party then determined to leave the horses and cart, proceeding in the boat to the lake. On December 6 they set sail, but shortly after departure were forced to stop to repair their craft which had been damaged by a sunken tree. Patching it up as well as was possible under the circumstances, they continued once more to follow the channel.

Some of the crew stated that they had previously walked from Port Fairy to Captain Blenkinsop's fishery, carrying their only

* So named after the boat.

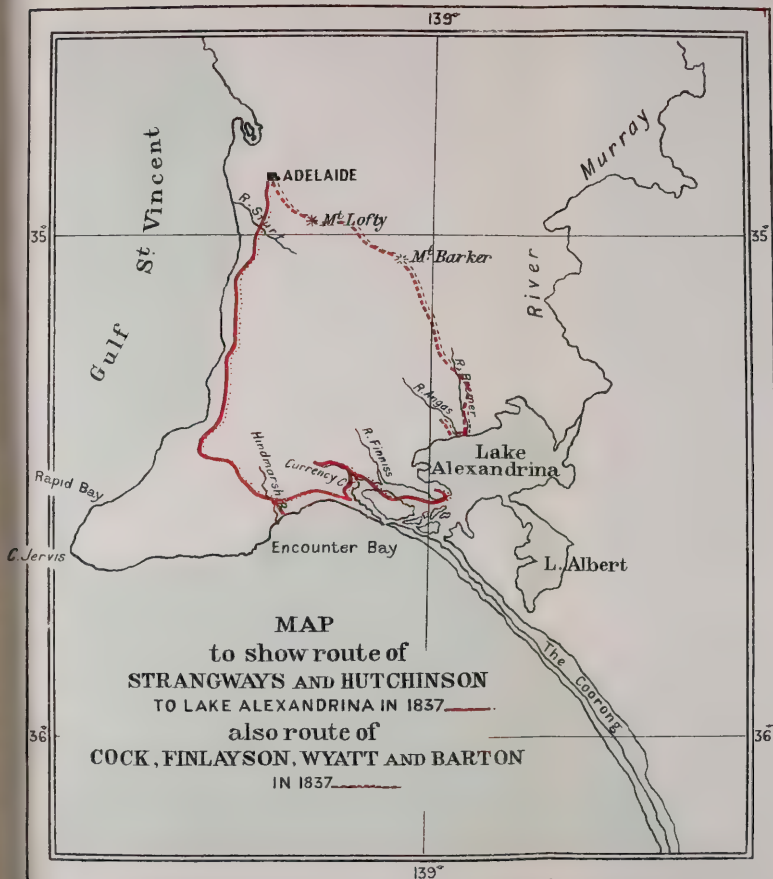
provision (flour) with them on a pack-horse. On arriving at the channel they had found it impossible to cross, so, abandoning the horse, had constructed a raft of pine, and after a day's exertion reached the other bank. Being examined afterwards by Judge Jeffcott, the men—John Foley, Henry Manly, and Edward Stone—swore to the truth of their story, asserting that the journey had taken six weeks to accomplish.

The party now landed on a small stony island about fifteen miles in length and very irregular; this was named Hindmarsh Island. From here they rowed along the north shore and discovered a strait about six miles wide. Spending the night under the point on the north shore, they ascended it next morning and obtained a good view of the lake. This shelter was named Point Sturt on Sturt's Peninsula, and a pole was erected upon it bearing the date.* The weather now became so rough that the explorers were forced to remain inactive; on the 8th provisions were examined and it was discovered that only sufficient rations for one day remained. The party therefore hurried back to the depot, a distance of thirty miles, but found little here, so Captain Blenkinsop volunteered to ride to the fishery to obtain fresh supplies.

During his absence Sir John Jeffcott and the Governor's son, who had been wrecked in the South Australian on the 8th, arrived, having decided to visit the exploring party. On the 12th the Captain returned, and in company with Judge Jeffcott started to recross the bar. The waters proved so rough and the surf so angry that the little boat was overwhelmed and sank. Few of its occupants escaped, and these survivors owed their rescue to the natives, who, plunging into the waves, dragged them to shore. Amongst the drowned, however, were numbered Captain Blenkinsop and Sir John Jeffcott. This sad accident, perforce, put an end to all exploratory work, and the party now returned to Adelaide.

The tragic termination of the expedition not only robbed South Australia of two able and distinguished colonists, but also discouraged others from attempting to navigate the entrance to the lake. It was now realized how dangerous the outlet was; any attempt to enter the river mouth was rendered hazardous owing to the constant surf, the strength of the current, the presence of

* December 6, 1837. Point McLeay was also named.





numerous eddies, and the narrowness of the channel. Indeed, the majority were inclined to over estimate the difficulties to be faced and to proclaim the entrance entirely unnavigable.

The next occasion on which what may be termed the "Murray mouth question" was introduced to general notice was in 1838. The *Fanny*, under the command of Captain Gill, was wrecked off the south-east coast, and in obtaining help and bringing the passengers to land the Captain entered the outlet several times. He was strongly of the opinion that it was perfectly safe for vessels of moderate tonnage, asserting that no danger need be feared.

This optimistic view caused so much comment that Captain Sturt, who was then in Adelaide, became desirous of visiting the lake once more to see if his first estimate would prove to be mistaken. On September 11 he set out with Messrs. T. Bewes and Giles Strangways and Mr. Inman, arriving at Captain Wright's fishery on the 14th. Obtaining a boat from the captain, he wished to negotiate the entrance, but was prevented by unfavourable weather. When three attempts had been similarly frustrated Sturt was compelled to conclude that the channel was hazardous, and that good fortune alone had saved Captain Gill from disaster.

When such contradictory opinions were expressed concerning the safety of the entrance it was felt that a more detailed knowledge of the conditions prevailing was needed. Accordingly Mr. Pullen,* the discoverer of Port Adelaide, was dispatched to the lake to study the navigability of the Murray mouth. While in this vicinity Mr. Pullen was connected with the discovery of the murdered passengers of the *Maria*,† and also spent some time in surveying the site of Port Elliot. Different causes delayed the negotiation of the outlet, and prevented the party from entering the lake. In June, 1839, Mr. Pullen had hoped to be able to solve the perplexed question of the entrance, but a fire destroyed the equipment of the surveyors and they were compelled to refit before

* Afterwards Vice-Admiral Pullen, of Arctic fame.

† On July 25, 1840, the news of the wreck of the *Maria* and the subsequent massacre of her passengers and crew by the natives was brought to Adelaide by two Big Murray blacks. Mr. Pullen "started from Goolwa in a boat with the following parties, viz., Dr. Penny, five sailors, one policeman, and three Encounter Bay blacks, Bob, Peter, and Charley." An expedition was also dispatched under Major O'Halloran to investigate, and two natives, Mongarawata and Pilgarie, were, after a trial, executed.

proceeding to the channel. Meanwhile a survey of the lands in this district had been proceeding and Captain Frome had secured a chart of Lake Alexandrina. In company with Messrs. Nixon and Handcock he had also examined the whole of the Milmenrura district. In September, 1840, Mr. Pullen was successful in entering and returning through the outlet. Governor Gawler, who was present on this occasion, complimented Pullen and his crew of volunteers* on their achievement. This, however, demonstrated nothing of great importance, for it had already been proved by Captain Gill that a boat could pass the entrance in safety. The problem now was could a ship of moderate tonnage do likewise.

This point Mr. Pullen then proceeded to settle. In his report of April, 1841, he expressed his firm belief in the navigability of the channel "for vessels of a certain draught of water." "I am now," he says, "so thoroughly satisfied of its practicability that, when it is more closely buoyed, vessels of six feet draught may pass either in or out with any tide at any time." The next report from the lake states that "Her Majesty's sloop *Waterwitch* had ascended the mouth of the Murray." This fact was held to establish definitely the claims to the river mouth to be considered as a navigable passage; yet, as was pointed out, the *Waterwitch* was merely of about ten tons burthen, and the entrance could, therefore, be assumed only practicable for vessels of moderate size under favourable conditions.

Although the vexed question of the entrance might now be supposed to be settled, the river did not come into prominence as a means of communication.† It was not until Sir Henry Young became Governor of South Australia that much enthusiasm was displayed in the matter. Through his efforts £4,000 was voted "for the first and second iron steamboats of forty horse-power or more than two feet draught that should succeed in navigating the Murray from Goolwa to at least the junction of the Darling." In August, 1853, these conditions were fulfilled by Captain Francis Cadell,‡

* The volunteers were: John Duncan, Richard Forster, Francis More, Henry Hooper, George Richardson, and Travers More.

† Mr. Pullen had applied for government assistance in navigating the river, but the scheme was not favourably considered.

‡ Captain Randall had also in the *Mary Ann* navigated the river, going a little higher than Cadell. Randall had, however, made no preparations for trading, and on these grounds and also because of the smallness of his vessel, the £4,000 was awarded to Cadell, and only £300 to Randall.

who in the *Lady Augusta** voyaged to Swan Hill and secured a substantial cargo of wool†. This successful beginning inspired others to similar efforts, and the River Murray trade was now regularly established.

* Captain Davidson navigated the vessel from Sydney; she was then taken through the sea mouth by Cadell.

† At Poon Boon two hundred and twenty bales of wool were awaiting the vessel, the first river cargo of the *Lady Augusta*.

CHAPTER VIII

EDWARD J. EYRE

Among the intrepid explorers, honoured in Australian history, few names are more worthy of respect and admiration than that of Edward Eyre. With a daring and courage that cannot be over-estimated he repeatedly faced the perils of the wilderness in his endeavours to extend the boundaries of knowledge, struggling bravely against the dangers that confronted him, only to find his efforts frustrated by adverse conditions. Despite these handicaps which hampered his efforts, Mr. Eyre succeeded in making discoveries which from a geographical point of view have proved of the greatest interest and value to all South Australians.

Mention of his overland journeys has already been made, and, indeed, Mr. Eyre was one of the earliest travellers to reach Adelaide, being only "second in point of time to Hawdon." He was, in addition, the first to drive sheep successfully from Victoria to South Australia. The explorer had also to his credit other trips outside the boundaries of our State, including journeys from the Liverpool Plains to the Murray, Sydney to Port Phillip, and King George's Sound to Swan River.

Being desirous of penetrating Central Australia, Eyre decided in 1839 to journey northwards from the head of Spencer's Gulf. It seemed to him that Flinders Range would be found to cross the continent, and in consequence of this belief he was especially eager to examine its formation. With a party of five, therefore, he left Adelaide on May 1st, taking two horse teams as well as supplies for nearly three months. The first few days were spent in well-watered and fertile country, and the party, after traversing the undulating and grassy hills of the range, crossed the chain of ponds named by Hill the Wakefield and the Hutt. Eyre now traced the latter until

arrival at the Broughton; then following this stream he found that it disappeared amidst a sandy channel. Next a tract of high open country was crossed in the vicinity of Mount Remarkable, and Crystal Brook was passed. The country was gradually becoming more barren, the supplies of water were less frequent. Arriving at the head of the Gulf the party encamped for a week sixteen miles beyond it, while Eyre examined the neighbourhood. He climbed a range to the northward, obtaining an extensive view; tier after tier of hills blocked all progress to the north, while to the east also stretched rugged and sterile ranges; to the west lay a sandy desert, and in the north and north-west a glittering strip resembling water could be detected. This was the Lake Torrens of to-day. So discouraging was the outlook that Eyre deemed it advisable to return to the depot, where he found the overseer who had just arrived from an expedition to the south-west. He reported that the country in this direction was inhospitable and waterless, while numerous ranges would render progress difficult.

Realizing, then, that exploration in this locality would prove fruitless, Eyre determined to examine the land to the west of the Gulf, and accompanied by the overseer went thirty-five miles on foot in this direction. However, no water could be discovered by the travellers, so they were under the necessity of returning. Pursuing their outward track for some miles Eyre then "struck off" for the north-west bend of the Murray, but was obliged to go further south than he had intended. He now followed the river banks to Wellington; then, having found a good pass in the ranges near Aldgate, he arrived at the capital again on June 29, after a most arduous and disappointing journey. Although his expedition was not successful in discovering tracts of good country and streams of large magnitude, it did, however, give intending explorers an idea of the difficulties to be contended with in this direction, and also attracted much public attention to the unknown northern district.

On July 8, 1839, Eyre again left Adelaide, proceeding to Port Lincoln. Thence he followed the coast to Streaky Bay, where he formed a depot at a spring two miles south-east of the most southerly bight of the bay. Then reconnoitring ahead, Eyre found that the country was barren, sandy, and destitute of water, but despite these adverse conditions he struggled on to "the 133rd

parallel of longitude a little beyond Point Bell." This was, he says, "the most westerly point I could reach, as the scarcity of grass and the absence of all water compelled me to return in spite of my most anxious desire to have continued our route two degrees farther west."

On arrival at the depot Eyre found that the vessel which was to bring supplies had not yet done so, and that he must decide whether to wait at Streaky Bay or to commence the homeward journey without the additional provisions. The overseer was sent to reconnoitre but reported the water along their route to be drying up.

On September 18, therefore, they left the depot and journeyed eastward. Lofty hills were seen, and named Gawler Ranges in honour of the Governor; then pushing on the party reached the old depot of the previous expedition near Mount Arden. From here Eyre went on horseback for ninety miles beyond the camp and saw from the heights of the Flinders Range Lake Torrens barring the path to the north; meanwhile the overseer had been examining the country to the east.

From the depot the party returned to Adelaide by the former route, and Eyre was forced to realize that no discoveries of benefit to the State had been made. "It is," he states, "with feelings of deep disappointment and regret that I communicate the results of that expedition and the destruction of those sanguine hopes of finding a fertile and valuable country towards the western limits of this province."

For some time a means of communication overland with Western Australia had been desired, and meetings of influential citizens were convened to discuss the question of dispatching an expedition to the west. Varying opinions were advanced concerning the advisability of this course; some advocated its adoption, while others favoured a northern route in the hope that fertile country might lie behind the barren stretches already traversed. Finally it was decided to instruct the party to proceed to Lake Torrens, which was to be examined; thence they were to penetrate inland as far as possible. The colonial cutter *Waterwitch* was chartered to convey all heavy equipment to the starting place at the head of Spencer's Gulf. Being keenly interested in this scheme,

Mr. Eyre volunteered to conduct the expedition and also undertook to defray one-third of the expenses of the party; on this generous offer being received preparations* for departure were at once commenced.

On June 18, 1840, everything was ready, and the party† arranged to commence their journey. Leaving Adelaide amidst great excitement they proceeded to a branch of the Para, where a halt was made for the night. On the 20th Eyre's sheep stations on the Light were reached. Here the expedition waited for a couple of days while final arrangements were made. Then starting once more they followed the course of the Light until the Gilbert was reached on the 24th. Passing the head of the Gilbert and Wakefield chain of ponds, the party reached the Hill, thence following the Hutt. They next crossed the Broughton on the 26th, and arrived at a peak which they named Spring Hill. Now Rocky River and Crystal Brook were passed, and, the explorers keeping under the Flinders Range, a "watercourse previously named by Eyre Myall Ponds" was reached, where the water was discovered to be much lower than in the previous year. On July 3 the party arrived at Eyre's old depot near Mount Arden, where a halt was made for a few weeks to examine the neighbouring country, and to wait for the Waterwitch, which had not yet arrived.

Eyre now set off on a reconnoitring trip, and journeyed as far as Mount Eyre, so named by Colonel Gawler to mark the limit of the 1839 expedition. Climbing the mount he obtained a view of the district; then, descending, continued his progress to Lake Torrens. This he found to be dry on the surface but to be boggy underneath, a state of affairs which rendered any attempt to cross it unsuccessful. Then journeying to what was subsequently called Mount Deception he obtained a view of the neighbourhood, which proved most unfavourable. In one direction was an impassable lake, in another a barren plain, in another inhospitable rocks. Having succeeded, however, in finding a water supply which he called

* The expedition proved very expensive owing to the high prices prevailing, and the total cost of wages and supplies amounted to £1,391. £680 of this was paid by Eyre from his own personal income.

† The personnel of the expedition comprised Mr. Eyre, Mr. Scott, as assistant, John Baxter, overseer, Corporal Coles, John Houston, and R. McRobert, drivers, with Neramberein and Cootachah, two aboriginal boys

Depot Pool, Eyre decided to rejoin the party, one hundred and twenty miles distant, and bring them thither. Arriving at the camp he found everything satisfactory, and on July 25 the whole expedition set out for the Pool which they reached on the 30th.

On August 2 Eyre started once more to reconnoitre. On this occasion pushing past Mount Deception he found and named Termination Hill. Then returning to Mount Deception Range he discovered a watercourse which he called the Scott. On August 7 he arrived at the depot to find that since nearly all the water had been exhausted he was confronted with the problem of moving to a fresh camp. If the party travelled east to permanent water they were leaving their proposed route and entering poor country, whereas if the Scott were chosen as their new base they must face the fact that the supply of water was precarious. The latter course was adopted, however, and on August 9 the party arrived at the new depot. On the same day Eyre set out on a journey to Termination Hill; by the 12th he had reached and named Mount Northwest. He then travelled towards what appeared to be a small lake, but it proved on examination to be a portion of the bed of the Torrens. Turning back to the depot, Eyre dispatched the overseer to the east on August 18 to find the watercourses previously seen on the 5th, and this search proved successful. Again on the 22nd Eyre set out, but was once more turned back by the Torrens. In company with Mr. Scott, he made another expedition to the north on the 27th, and discovering a high hill fulfilled a promise made to the Governor, naming this prominent feature in honour of Mr. Serle. Near this mount a large watercourse was found which was called the Frome;* then, ascending Mount Serle, Eyre viewed the surrounding country.

Progress seemed barred in all directions, but returning to the depot for supplies Eyre determined to make doubly certain of this fact. Accordingly on the 29th he set out once more, and, following the Frome until it turned salt, proceeded to a hill which he named Mount Distance.† From here he observed another low peak, and steering for this, Eyre climbed it to find his opinion of the impossibility of proceeding confirmed, for the lake once more stretched

* In honour of the Surveyor-General of the State.

† Since he was deceived as to the distance he was from the hill.

across his path. Naming this outpost Mount Hopeless, he turned back to the depot, fully determined to waste no more time and energy on so desolate and forbidding a region.

On September 12 the party arrived at the Mount Arden camp, and it was now necessary to consider their next move. Two courses lay before them, either the expedition could be abandoned, or a new route for discovery could be chosen. If the latter procedure were adopted, two alternatives again presented themselves; the travellers could either go east and follow the Murray to the Darling, or, journeying to Streaky Bay, they could endeavour to travel thence into the interior. After pondering earnestly over the course to pursue, Eyre decided that the latter route would prove the more valuable from an explorer's point of view, while such a journey was more likely to be of benefit to the colony.

The party was therefore to proceed to Streaky Bay, while Eyre visited Port Lincoln to obtain provisions. The leader, with Mr. Scott, accordingly departed for the harbour; on their way Refuge Rocks were passed and named, and on October 3 the port was reached. No boats or stores were, however, obtainable here, so the party were forced to remain in hopes of securing a suitable craft; one of the residents,* however, volunteered to put a temporary hatch over an open boat of four or five tons and dispatch it to Adelaide. This offer being accepted, Mr. Scott started on October 8, taking with him Eyre's reports. On the 22nd he returned to Port Lincoln in the Government cutter *Waterwitch* with the required supplies†, so that on the 26th the party set out once more. Mount Hope, so named by Eyre on a former journey, was passed, and the travellers reached Lake Hamilton‡. Then they pushed on to Lake Newland||; a high granite bluff was named Mount Hall§, while a similar formation was called Mount Cooper¶.

Passing Streaky and Smoky Bays the party proceeded to Denial Bay; then, leaving there on November 11, with the assistance of some friendly natives they succeeded in reaching Fowler's Bay.

* Dr. Harvey, the only Government official then at the Settlement.

† Scott also brought Thomas Costelow to take the place of MacRobert.

‡ Named after Eyre's friend, George Hamilton, Esq.

|| In honour of another friend of Eyre, R. F. Newland, Esq.

§ After G. Hall, the Governor's private secretary.

¶ In honour of Charles Cooper, the Judge of the Colony.

Following there, the explorers landed the stores from the *Waterwitch*, and Eyre sent the cutter to Denial Bay, directing the captain to return on December 11. He now deemed it necessary to reconnoitre once more, so, leaving the camp under the control of Baxter, he set off on an exploring trip around the head of the Bight. The horses, however, suffered so severely from lack of water that it was necessary to hasten back to Fowler's Bay for supplies. Then on the 28th, with a dray drawn by three horses, Eyre started once more. Undeterred by the reiterated warnings of the natives: "No water, no water," he pushed on, to find that their prophecies were all too true. Despite his frantic efforts the three horses died, and Eyre was forced to send back to the depot for five more. On December 10 Mr. Scott travelled out with the required supplies.

Eyre now realized that if he was to be successful different methods must be adopted. Accordingly he determined to send back Corporal Coles and John Houston in the cutter which had recently arrived, and to give his horses a rest ere attempting the journey once more. On the 29th, accompanied by the overseer, one man and native boy, he set forth, being again warned by the blacks of the scarcity of water inland. On January 6 the overseer was sent back with the dray, and a little later the man was also dispatched to the camp. Eyre and the native still journeyed on, being successful after many struggles in rounding the Bight; they then turned back to the depot. How arduous a task they had performed can be best understood if we remember the scarcity of water, extreme heat, lack of distinctive landmarks, and other difficulties against which they had to contend. It was only by short journeys* and constant care of provisions that the explorers could succeed.

Not satisfied with what they had already accomplished, Eyre decided to make a final effort to explore the country stretching between Fowler's Bay and the Western Australian boundary.†

* The distance covered by the different members of the party can be better realized if an abstract of their labours in rounding the Bight be given: Mr. Eyre, 643 miles, 40 days; Mr. Scott, 50 miles, 4 days; overseer, 230 miles, 22 days; eldest native, 270 miles, 19 days; youngest native, 395 miles, 23 days.

† Eyre writes: "To have returned now would have been . . . to have thrown away the only opportunity presented to me of making some amends for past failure, and of endeavouring to justify the confidence that had been reposed in me by carrying through the exploration which had been originally contemplated to the westward, now that it was no longer possible to accomplish that to the north, for which it had given place."

He resolved, therefore, to send the cutter with the stores to Cape Arid and to attempt the journey with pack-horses. When the cutter arrived it was found that as the *Waterwitch* had proved unsafe the *Hero* had been chartered in her place. The terms of the contract, however, provided only for voyages in South Australia, thus frustrating Eyre's intention of sending her to Cape Arid. He now determined to go on alone, and on January 31 sent back the majority of the party to Adelaide, retaining only Baxter, the two natives, and Wylie, who had just arrived*. The explorers, now rested for a while before commencing their hazardous journey. On February 24 they had intended to set out, but the *Hero* returned with letters entreating Eyre not to undertake "this mad attempt."† These pessimistic views did not, however, discourage this intrepid explorer, and on the following day the momentous journey was commenced.

"We were now alone," says Eyre, "myself, my overseer, and three native boys, with a fearful task before us; the bridge was broken down behind us, and we must succeed in reaching King George's Sound or perish; no middle course remained. It was impossible for us to be insensible to the isolated and hazardous position we were in; but the feeling only nerved and stimulated us the more in our exertions to accomplish the duty we had engaged in."

From the commencement the journey was marred by anxiety and suffering: water was almost unobtainable, while the uncertainty of ultimate success proved very trying. By March 12 Eyre states that one hundred and thirty-five miles of desert country "without a drop of water in its whole extent" had been traversed, and "at a season of the year the most unfavourable for such an undertaking. . . . We still had six hundred miles of country to traverse measured in a straight line across the chart, but taking into account the inequalities of the ground and the circuit we were frequently obliged to make, we could not hope to accomplish this in less than eight hundred miles of distance."

* Eyre had been anxious to obtain Wylie, an aboriginal from King George's Sound, whom he had taken to Adelaide with him.

† "From the Governor I received a kind letter to the same effect," says Eyre, "offering to assist me in any further attempts I might wish to make round Lake Torrens or to explore the Northern Interior. . . ."

The overseer had now become convinced that failure awaited them, and, although calm, was exceedingly gloomy; nor were his fears without foundation, for the explorers were in a perilous position, being far from any settlement and faced with shortage of provisions and scarcity of water. On March 28 some of the horses had perforce to be abandoned, while on the morrow the last of their water supply having been used, they were driven to collecting the dew to assuage their thirst. On the following day the last piece of bread was finished, and although matters were slightly improved on securing some water by digging, still on April 5 the travellers were reduced to a ration of half a pound of flour per day. At this stage Baxter and one of the natives were dispatched to bring up the abandoned equipment. On April 10 they arrived, having only secured one horse.

Eyre was now forced to reconsider his plans. Would it not be wiser to relinquish his designs and return to Fowler's Bay? On pondering over this question he was re-confirmed in his first decision, for an attempt to retrace his footsteps could only prove as disastrous as an effort to struggle on might become. It was, however, necessary that the deserted goods should be recovered, and, going back with Wylie, Eyre was successful in securing them. One of the horses was now slaughtered and its flesh prepared for use, but at this stage the natives proved treacherous, and Wylie with one of the boys, having stolen a supply of food, quitted the camp. After a four days' absence they returned, forced by hunger to rejoin the party. On the 29th the explorers started once more, and in the evening, at the overseer's request, camped near some rocks, hoping to have more chance of catching rain if any should fall. Baxter being very tired, Eyre volunteered to take the first watch, and it was to this kindly action that he owed his life.

The horses having strayed, he followed them, and when about one quarter of a mile distant from the camp was horrified to hear the report of a gun. Hastening back, Eyre was met by Wylie calling in terror: "Oh, massa! oh, massa! come here!" Realizing that his fears were all too well founded he obeyed the summons, to find the camp in great disorder, and Baxter wounded and dying. "The frightful, the appalling truth now burst upon me," says Eyre, "that I was alone in the desert. He who had faithfully served me

for many years, who had followed my fortunes in adversity and in prosperity, who had accompanied me in all my wanderings, and whose attachment to me had been his sole inducement to remain with me in this last, and to him, alas! fatal journey was now no more."

The two native boys had disappeared, taking with them both the double-barrelled guns and a large portion of the provisions. Doubtless the noise made by the plunderers had aroused Baxter, who paid for his watchfulness with his life. To add to the horror of the situation Eyre was practically weaponless, the only arms he possessed being two pistols for which he had no cartridges, and his rifle which had become jammed by a ball. Knowing that in all probability the murderers would endeavour to kill him also, Eyre's first action was to endeavour to make his rifle serviceable, and, whilst melting the ball out of the breach, he had a narrow escape from death owing to the gun going off unexpectedly. The possession of a useful firearm now restored much of his confidence, and despite the hazard of the attempt he determined to push on. The perils of the journey were largely increased, for, being bereft of his sole white companion, he must rely on Wylie, concerning whose loyalty he had strong doubts. It seemed extremely probable that Wylie had agreed to rob the explorers and desert, but had been shocked out of his intention by the brutal murder committed, not only because of its penalty in civilized communities, but also because of the probability of his sharing a similar fate.

Then, too, the scanty supplies had been still further reduced, and all that remained for the travellers was forty pounds of flour, with a little water, tea and sugar. If Eyre abandoned everything but necessities it might be possible to complete the journey, but a further peril must be faced; the two natives would doubtless dog their footsteps, awaiting a suitable opportunity to slay them, and secure the remaining stores. Undaunted by these well-nigh overwhelming difficulties Eyre and Wylie set out on their desperate journey. Eyre's premonitions proved true, for they were followed all day at a safe distance by the two miscreants, who retreated when he assumed the aggressive. By travelling all night they were successful in evading the aborigines, and could now struggle on with no other deterrent than the scarcity of food and water and

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the barrenness of the neighbouring country. By May 2 they had travelled one hundred and thirty-eight miles from their last water, and their sufferings became intense, but on the 3rd a supply was found. Eyre was now certain that the murderers had turned back to Fowler's Bay, and had in all probability perished of starvation.

Water was now obtainable by digging along the route, and one of the animals being killed, a diet of horseflesh was provided. This, however, proved unwholesome, and illness resulted, but the explorers were fortunately able to secure several kangaroos, which supplied them with sufficient provisions. On May 19 they arrived at Port Malcolm, finding traces of European visitors.* On the 26th they started once more, and discovered a high range of abrupt mountains, which they named in honour of Lord John Russell.† They now encamped on the east side of Cape Arid; then pushing on towards Thistle Cove, discovered to their intense delight a vessel lying at anchor in a sheltered bay.‡ This proved to be the *Mississippi*, under Captain Rossiter. Going on board on June 2 they were received with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and enjoyed a much-needed rest until the 14th. Stores and comfortable clothes were given them, while the ship's blacksmith shod Eyre's horse; then in a much more confident spirit they set out again.

On the 23rd Mount Barren Ranges were seen, and pushing on the travellers reached the banks of the Candiup River on July 6. Wading across the stream they rested for the night, and then, ascending a hill, saw stretched before them Albany, the goal of their untiring efforts. Their delight at this auspicious termination to their arduous journey can be imagined, and the enthusiastic reception which greeted Eyre must have rewarded him for his year of determined endeavour. Not only was Eyre welcomed, but also Wylie's sable friends showed the utmost joy at his return, having long mourned him as dead.

On July 13 Eyre returned in the *Truelove* to Adelaide, where he was enthusiastically received by his fellow-citizens, and, indeed,

* Upon one of the titrees was cut "Ship Julian, 1840," "Haws, 1840," and other letters.

† At this time Secretary of State for the colonies.

‡ Named by Eyre in honour of Captain Rossiter. Eyre and Wylie had at first seen two boats from the ship, but could not attract the attention of

no reception could have been worthy of this daring explorer. The results of the expedition were not, however, commensurate with the efforts of the party, for, though scientifically and geographically extremely interesting, from a commercial point of view they were of no value. But apart from the actual facts discovered by the explorers the expedition was of far greater import to the people of South Australia. In its story of patient heroism and undaunted courage it held a message for all pioneers—the lesson of heroic endeavour and dogged determination, those qualities without which no successful State can be reared.

Nor could any expedition by subsequent explorers surpass in its tale of suffering and patient endurance Eyre's journey to the west, unless it were the gallant struggle of Sturt's party in 1844. The latter had, indeed, consolations which Eyre was denied. Even when conditions were at their worst the travellers could encourage one another and assist their weaker comrades. Eyre's position was, however, full of a peculiar horror, for he faced the wilderness alone save for the companionship of Wylie.

In 1842 another journey of interest was made by Eyre, who on this occasion travelled up the River Murray from Moorundi, where he was stationed. Several considerations prompted this trip; he was anxious to secure the goodwill of the native tribes of the neighbourhood and to ascertain if any overland parties were near at hand. In addition he wished to determine the cause of the high floods which had occurred in that year, and to investigate the probability of a route into the interior by the ranges near Mount Lyell. Journeying up the Murray, he passed the Rufus; then, striking across the scrub, the explorer reached the banks of the Darling. Eyre's health had not been good for some time, and the exertions of the journey caused a relapse; at last so exhausted did he become that he was obliged to relinquish his project and return to Moorundi.

It would be difficult to estimate the value of Eyre's services to our State; not only were his exploratory abilities of the highest order, but also the extent of his expeditions was considerable. He was the first to urge the importance of the far north as a field of discovery and to support his opinion by practical attempts to reveal its secrets. Although many short excursions had been undertaken

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etc. this by the pioneer colonists in search of good land no expedition of any magnitude had as yet explored this country. Several reasons had contributed to this condition: not only was a more extensive tract already examined than the small settlement required, but also geographical causes delayed any further advance. The districts to the south-east and west were in general fairly well known, and it was of the north alone that information was lacking. Nor was this region entirely uninspected, for the district extending as far as the Wakefield and Hutt had been previously discovered; what was needed was a determined effort to travel beyond the boundaries of former knowledge and to penetrate the mysterious interior.

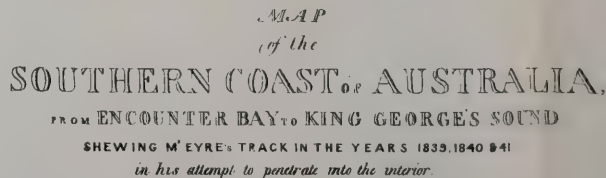
This was the task which Eyre essayed with an intrepidity and courage which did not, alas! win their just reward. The explorations* which had already been undertaken in the South Australian districts possess but little interest apart from the actual discoveries made. Their attraction centres in the country examined, and, this being the case, while of value to the State, they are not therefore intensely interesting information. Now with the introduction of the struggle to reach the interior, a race of explorers was to arise who faced the wilderness with undaunted bravery, and whose gallant feats of daring won the admiration and sympathy of all.


Amongst these adventurous spirits must be included such men as Eyre, Sturt, and Stuart, whose journeys rival in their tale of patient courage the fabled exploits of the mythical heroes of old. The debt which South Australia owes to these hardy explorers cannot be over-estimated, and to Eyre, as the pioneer in this particular branch of discovery, special credit is necessarily due.

*Inception of course the expedition of Sturt in 1829 and the tragic journey of Barker in 1831. That of Governor Gawler might also be included.

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B The shore of the L is bounded by a steep sandy ridge
No grass nor fresh water



Horse track 
 Drag d!

B The shore of the L is bounded by a steep sandy ridge, covered with subula & small shrubs
No grass nor fresh water

1. T O R R E N S
Supposed course of Law.



CHAPTER IX

THE SOUTH EAST

Since Mr. Bonney's journey of 1839 more public attention had been bestowed upon the south-east portion of the province, and the reports of overlanders had given some knowledge of the district. In 1844 a definite attempt was made to examine this region, when an expedition* under Governor Grey visited this locality, securing much interesting information about the neighbourhood.

The Governor had hopes that a closer examination of the south-east would discover good tracts of land. "For," he says, "this part of South Australia has been hitherto almost unknown, having been only traversed in one direction by overland parties, and as the line of route which they had always pursued passed through a country for the most part of a very unpromising character, it was very generally imagined that the south-eastern portions of the province offered little inducements to settlers, and that there was little probability of any continuous line of settlements being established between South Australia and New South Wales." This neglect he now intended to remedy.

Leaving Adelaide on April 10, 1844, the party overtook the drays at the Bremer and encamped at Lake Victoria†, about twelve miles from Wellington. On the following day an overland party was encountered and Wellington was reached, while on the

* The party was to consist of the Governor, Captain O'Halloran, and Messrs. B. T. Finniss, Thomas Burr, G. F. Angas, C. Bonney, and Gisborne.

† As has been mentioned, Sturt had named the lake in honour of Princess Victoria Alexandrina, afterwards Queen Victoria. A few years later it was suggested that the name should be changed from Lake Alexandrina to Lake Victoria, and this appears on some of the early official maps. This accounts for the use of the name both in Mr. Burr's journal and on the map of the discoveries of this expedition.

morrow the travellers proceeded to the crossing on the Murray; by evening all save one empty dray, the horses and bullocks, had forded the stream. On the 15th they were unfortunately delayed owing to one of the horses becoming caught in a hollow in a rocky boulder, so it was not until the following day that a fresh start was made. Wellington was again reached, and, learning that the Governor, who was to join them, had not yet arrived, the party proceeded to Lake Victoria, where a halt was made for the night. On the 17th they arrived at Bonney's waterholes, where Mr. Bonney met them, and then followed the overland track round Lake Albert until it took a westerly direction.

As they journeyed southwards the Coorong was reached, and, selecting a good camping ground, the explorers waited for Governor Grey who arrived in the afternoon of the 19th. Next MacGrath's Flat was crossed, and on the 22nd Bonney's Creek was passed; here an overland party under Mr. Woods was seen. On the 23rd a visit was paid to the coast, where the sandhills were admired. "Amongst them," says Mr. Burr, "the scenery is very beautiful, and may be termed mountain scenery in miniature." The next day saw the travellers at Wambat Range, and, following the Coorong, they arrived on the 25th at a large granite rock which formed a prominent landmark. Now the party proceeded along the beach to Ross's Creek, and on the 27th a halt was made in order that Cape Bernouilli might be visited. Accordingly His Excellency, with six other members of the party, started for the Cape. Skirting the coast they soon reached their destination, and the magnificent view was admired by all.

On the 29th country of a different character was entered—wattles, gumtrees, and blackwood were numerous, grass grew luxuriantly, and a fine watercourse was noticed. The Governor being now anxious to visit Mount Benson, a detour was made in that direction. The land in this neighbourhood was grassy and undulating, while a good view of Guichen Bay was obtained. Then returning to their former route, the travellers encamped in the vicinity of Lake Hawdon. Little progress was made on the following day, but on May 1, when they mounted high ground Rivoli Bay could be seen, with two ships at anchor, while nearer at hand lay two lakes. As these had not previously been discovered, His

Excellency named them Lake George and Lake Eliza. On the 3rd Rivoli Bay was reached, and it was found that the two schooners were the *Isabella* and the *Prince of Denmark*, both hailing from Hobart.

Here the travellers halted, for, says Mr. Burr, "His Excellency determined on moving the camp to the beach . . . and on establishing a depot there, at which the drays, tents, etc., should be left; and on proceeding from thence on horseback, with a reduced party, to Mounts Gambier and Schanck." On the 4th, therefore, the Governor, Messrs. Burr, Bonney, Gisborne and Angas, with three mounted police, set out for their new destination. Travelling to the south-east they discovered a lake, which was called by His Excellency in honour of Colonel Frome, while a second and larger sheet of water received the name of Lake Bonney. On the next morning a peculiar oval well was discovered, and was named by the Governor Devil's Punch Bowl. Now a view of Mount Schanck* could be obtained, and on the 6th the Mount was reached; thence the party proceeded to Mount Gambier. Another mountain was also seen and named in honour of Mr. Burr;† then, turning back, the travellers returned to the depot to find that during their absence Corporal Ide and Private Baker, of the Royal Sappers and Miners, had completed a chart of the bay and had obtained soundings of some of the coastline.

On the 9th the Governor, accompanied by Mr. Gisborne, went to Sherbert's Rock to hunt sea-lions, while Messrs. Bonney and Burr started homeward with the drays. About 5 p.m. the remainder of the travellers joined their companions; on the 11th Guichen Bay was visited, the party proceeding thence to Ross's Creek. By the 17th McGrath's Flat was reached, and as the travellers were now anxious to shorten the journey they struck across the desert to Mr. Giles's head station on Lake Albert. From here the explorers were accompanied by Mr. H. Giles to Adelaide.

"The results of our journey," says the Governor, "were of the most satisfactory nature; . . . we ascertained that by keeping

* The correct spelling is Schank, but the name will be found given in the maps as Schanck and Shanks. Since the mountain had been named by Grant in honour of Captain John Schank it has been possible for the correct form of the family name to be ascertained.

† The father of Mr. Thomas Burr, the Deputy Surveyor-General.

near the seacoast instead of pursuing the line of route previously adopted, there is an almost uninterrupted tract of good country between the Rivers Murray and Glenelg. In some places this line of good country thins off to a narrow belt; but in other portions of the route it widens out to a very considerable extent, and on approaching the boundaries of New South Wales* it forms one of the most extensive and continuous tracts of good country which is known to exist within the limits of South Australia. . . .

"The south-eastern portion of the province of South Australia has now been ascertained to be at least as fertile as any known portions of that colony. . . . Another material point is that this good country lies in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea, and that this part of the coast contains three bays, one of which has been ascertained to afford good anchorage to small vessels, even in the winter season, and there is good reason to suppose that Lacépède Bay will be found to possess the same advantage."

In the following year, at the Governor's suggestion, the south coast was surveyed from Rivoli to Cape Northumberland. Mr. E. Underwood performed this task with the object of discovering if an opening into Lake Bonney existed. The first port to be inspected was Rivoli Bay, where soundings were secured and a chart prepared. Having satisfied himself of the safety of this anchorage, Mr. Underwood next proceeded to Cape West Banks and examined the bay to the south-east of the headland. Then sailing on he arrived at Cape Northumberland, and finally Portland Bay was reached.

Owing to these expeditions in this vicinity the public interest felt in the south-east did not lapse. On the arrival of Lieutenant-Governor Robe a fresh impetus was given to exploration in this locality. Being desirous to examine in person this fertile region, Major Robe departed on an exploratory trip to the south-eastern district. The coastline was followed by the voyagers, the different bays along the seaboard being carefully examined. Then landing, they travelled overland to the Glenelg, which they crossed. The party next proceeded to Lakes Mundy and Alford and traversed the surrounding district. They then hurried homeward, arriving at Adelaide once more on February 15, 1846.

* In 1850 this district was separated from New South Wales when Victoria was made a separate colony.

ADELAIDE

SMYLOTT

10-11 APR

21-22 MAY

12-13 APR

Todds Sp

14-15 APR

16-17 APR

18-19 APR

20-21 APR

22-23 APR

24-25 APR

26-27 APR

28-29 APR

30-31 APR

1-2 MAY

3-4 MAY

5-6 MAY

7-8 MAY

9-10 MAY

11-12 MAY

13-14 MAY

15-16 MAY

17-18 MAY

19-20 MAY

21-22 MAY

23-24 MAY

25-26 MAY

27-28 MAY

29-30 MAY

31 MAY

1-2 JUN

3-4 JUN

5-6 JUN

7-8 JUN

9-10 JUN

11-12 JUN

13-14 JUN

15-16 JUN

17-18 JUN

19-20 JUN

21-22 JUN

23-24 JUN

25-26 JUN

27-28 JUN

29-30 JUN

1-2 JUL

3-4 JUL

5-6 JUL

7-8 JUL

9-10 JUL

11-12 JUL

13-14 JUL

15-16 JUL

17-18 JUL

19-20 JUL

21-22 JUL

23-24 JUL

25-26 JUL

27-28 JUL

29-30 JUL

31 JUL

1-2 AUG

3-4 AUG

5-6 AUG

7-8 AUG

9-10 AUG

11-12 AUG

Harriot's Sheep Station

14-15 APR

16-17 APR

18-19 APR

20-21 APR

22-23 APR

24-25 APR

26-27 APR

28-29 APR

30-31 APR

1-2 MAY

3-4 MAY

5-6 MAY

7-8 MAY

9-10 MAY

11-12 MAY

13-14 MAY

15-16 MAY

17-18 MAY

19-20 MAY

21-22 MAY

23-24 MAY

25-26 MAY

27-28 MAY

29-30 MAY

31 MAY

1-2 JUN

3-4 JUN

5-6 JUN

7-8 JUN

9-10 JUN

11-12 JUN

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17-18 JUN

19-20 JUN

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29-30 JUN

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14-15 APR

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29-30 JUL

31 JUL

1-2 AUG

3-4 AUG

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14-15 APR

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20-21 APR

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24-25 APR

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18-19 APR

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26-27 APR

28-29 APR

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23-24 JUN

25



The region thus examined was about one hundred miles by fifty, but the travellers did not enter the Tatiara country. The account given of the journey includes a report upon the bays of the southern coastline. From this it appears that Lacépède Bay was visited, but not examined in detail, whereas Guichen Bay, which had hitherto not been inspected,* was minutely described. It is said to be "immeasurably superior to Portland Bay," and great hopes were held of its future capabilities. "Guichen Bay," it is stated, "has a great advantage over Rivoli Bay in being easily accessible from all parts of the interior, . . . it is much more central than the other, being on the boundary so as to speak of the two great south-eastern districts and easily accessible to both." This favourable report of the possibilities of the new harbour attracted much attention, and in the papers of the time many references can be found to the south-eastern district of the State, showing that progress was now assured in that locality.

* "The bay had been discovered and mentioned by Captain Baudin, and was not mentioned by Captain Flinders, who did not see it when he visited the coast."

CHAPTER X

JOURNEYS TO THE NORTH

Although many trips had already been undertaken on the west coast and several exploratory journeys had been made to Yorke's Peninsula, little was as yet known of the tracts to the extreme north of the settlement. Expeditions had, ere this, penetrated the country as far northward as the Hutt River and the Gilbert, the stations of Messrs. Hawker and Peters respectively marking the boundaries of the progress made. With the exception of the explorations of Mr. Eyre, however, no knowledge had yet been gained concerning the lands farther north.

In 1842 more information was obtained through the medium of the excursion of the Surveyor-General, who leaving the Gilbert travelled to the north. Mount Bryan was visited and examined by Colonel Frome, who then pushed on to Ulaloo Hill. The creek bearing the same name was traced, but, as the water supply was failing, the party returned and followed the ranges to Black Rock Hill. The travellers now journeyed on to the highest point in the mountains west of Narien Range, but the scarcity of water rendered a return necessary, "and," says Frome, "I was obliged to leave the solution of the drainage and the boundary of the eastern shores of Lake Torrens to next winter."

He then adds: "The recent hurried visit of Mr. Burr, Deputy Surveyor-General, to Mount Arden to connect the country I have just described with Flinders Range has enabled me to fill in the accompanying sketch of an extensive part of the province of which hitherto nothing has been known."

In his report Mr. Burr gives a description of a tract of country seen on the eastern side of Flinders Range from Mount Brown to Crystal Brook. He states that this district is fine pastoral land,

well wooded and with an abundant water supply. An account of the ranges is then given, and the explorer continues: "By following up the main range from Cape Jervis, we find a great extent of good country. Nearly all the special surveys are situated in its ramifications, and beyond them to the north the available country just discovered and stretching nearly to Mount Arden. We have thus a fertile tract of country for about 240 miles in length from north to south."

The next year saw Frome set forth once more, "my object being," he said, "to ascertain the boundaries of the southern termination of the eastern branch of Lake Torrens, as laid down by Mr. Eyre, and also the nature of the country between Flinders Range, as high as the parallel of Mount Hopeless and the meridian of 141° (the eastern limit of the province)." As heavy and continuous rains had fallen the Surveyor-General was fortunately well supplied with water, and although as he journeyed northwards the amount diminished, still, by travelling from hill to hill sufficient could be found for the explorers' needs. Black Rock Range was crossed at Rowe's Creek, and the left bank of the Siccus reached. A large extent of plain stretched between the north and east, while a lurid light on the horizon warned the party that they were approaching Lake Torrens. A northerly course was still necessary to obtain water, however, and the margin of the lake, "or," says Frome, "as it might be more properly called, the desert," was reached. As the charts of Eyre and Frome did not coincide*, the Surveyor-General deemed it wisest to push on to the north. He now reached a high point, which he was able to identify as Mount Serle, so, "I knew it was useless," he says, "to advance further in the same direction to a spot which Eyre had named from the impossibility of proceeding beyond it, 'Mount Hopeless.'"

Accordingly Frome returned to Pasmore River, whence he dispatched two of the men with three horses to the depot at Black Rock Hill, only retaining Messrs. Henderson and Hawker and one policeman with a light cart. The next day the most northerly of the hills south of Lake Torrens was reached, but the policeman having unfortunately become lost, the party were detained searching for

* According to Eyre's chart this point of the lake was about 30 miles to the west of where Frome found it.

him. His tracks were traced, and it was found that he had reached the depot after travelling for five days without food. This unlucky occurrence had so delayed the travellers that insufficient provisions remained for another attempt, and it was, therefore, necessary to turn back.

On arrival at the depot the whole party journeyed to Mount Bryan, whence Frome made another attempt to penetrate the country to the north. Leaving the hill on August 25, he reached Mount Porcupine, but was unable to proceed further on account of an insufficient water supply.

The expedition was now abandoned, and the travellers returned homewards. "It appears to me certain," states the Surveyor-General, "that there is no country eastward of the high land extending N. from Mount Bryan as far as Mount Hopeless, a distance of about 300 miles, as far as the meridian 141° (and probably much beyond it), available for either agricultural, or pastoral purposes; and that, though there may be occasional spots of good land at the base of the main range, on the sources of the numerous creeks flowing from thence towards the inland desert, these must be too limited in extent to be of any present value."

In the same year reports of the discovering of fertile land in the neighbourhood of Anxious and Coffin's Bays had been received, and much public interest was aroused in the matter. Two whalers, Richard Harris and George Cummings, had travelled overland from Fowler's Bay to Port Lincoln, and had given an account of their journey to Mr. Matthew Smith, the resident magistrate at the latter place, and to the Editor of the "Southern Australian." Calculating the distance as two hundred miles, and presuming that they would be able to obtain provisions at St. Peter's Island and Streaky Bay, where whaling stations were situated, they took with them supplies for ten days. Skirting the seaboard they reached St. Peter's Island, where they secured a chart of the coast which proved of great service.

When Anxious Bay was reached the travellers determined to leave the shore and strike off inland, hoping both to shorten their journey and to have less difficulty in obtaining water. Lake Newland, so named by Mr. Eyre, was reached, says Harris, and they then journeyed due east for two days until a high conical hill was

Sketch of Country EAST OF FLINDERS RANGE

**EAST OF LINDENBURG
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

to illustrate a paper by

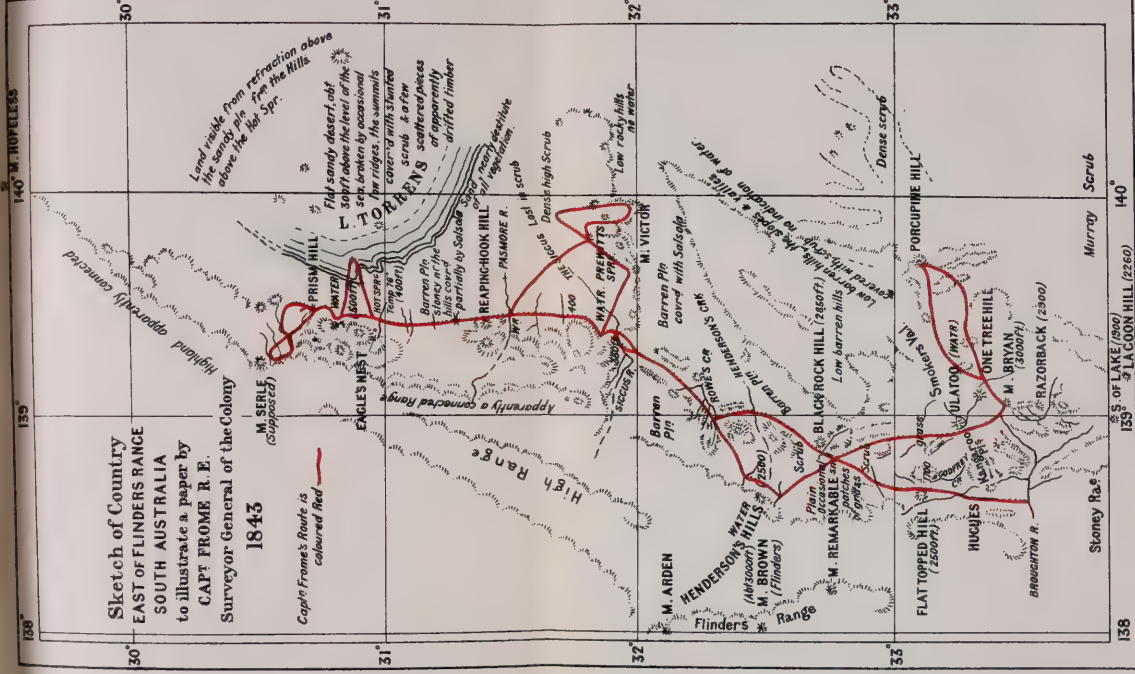
CAPT FROME R. E.

Surveyor General of the Colony

1843

M. SERLE,

*Capt'n Frome's Route is
coloured Red*



From Journal of Royal Geographical Society (London)
VOL. XIV

A VARIOUS CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES



seen which they presumed to be Mount Wedge. They now had entered fertile and well-watered country, but fearing lest they might lose their way, they determined to follow the coast once more. An extensive plain was now crossed, thickly covered with luxuriant grass and watered by large and apparently permanent lagoons. So fine was the country that, as Harris expressed it, he almost imagined himself on a fine grazing farm in England. At the end of two days they came to a belt of scrub, and shortly afterwards the shore was reached.

"Previous to reading Richard Harris's account of his journey from Fowler's Bay to Coffin's Bay," says Mr. Smith, "I had heard from his fellow traveller, George Cummings, a verbal statement which differs in some few particulars from that of Harris." He reports that after leaving Streaky Bay they had pushed inland to Mount Cooper, thence proceeding to Lake Newland. From here they journeyed to Mount Wedge, and then travelling south reached Point Drummond, where they joined the Governor Gawler and sailed to Port Lincoln. These discrepancies in the two accounts are, however, explained by the Editor of the "Southern Australian," who says, "We found Harris to be a silent man and he spoke principally in answer to our questions, and as we only examined him upon the subject of the good country and as to his route after he left Lake Newland, we did not ascertain the fact of his having struck into the interior from Streaky Bay, and of his visit to Mount Cooper, so that here Cummings's statement is additional, not different. The same may be said of the rest of Harris's statement, and Cummings's statement is therefore a valuable addition to that of Harris."

The main fact was, however, clear from the accounts of both: a large tract of fertile country lay inland, well watered and easy of access. Much public interest was aroused by this discovery, and it was felt that an expedition should be dispatched to investigate the accuracy of the reports.

In 1844, therefore, steps were taken to organize an exploratory party under the leadership of Mr. John Charles Darke*, who had been employed in the Survey Department of South Australia. On

* See "South Australian Register," August 24, 1844, for appeal for subscriptions to Darke's North-West Exploratory Expedition.

August 29 the party, consisting of Mr. Darke, John Theakston, James Howard and a cook, left Port Lincoln. From Darke's journal it can be seen that he journeyed north further than the Gawler Ranges*, appearing to have turned back when seventy-five miles north of Minnipa Hill, and retraced his footsteps within a few miles of Darke's Peak.

From Port Lincoln the explorers travelled north, and then turning north-west reached the Marble Ranges. On the 10th Wedge Hill was passed, but the water mentioned by Harris and Cummings could not be discovered. Next Mount Southam was seen and named, and later Granite Mount. On the 15th Darke decided that they had proved that no good land for settlers lay beyond the Gawler Ranges, and determined to return. On the 18th the old camp near Granite Mount was reached, and on the following day the party steered south-east for some peaks which were visible. On the 21st the natives, who had appeared friendly and very fearless, visited the travellers once more.

Two days later about twenty aboriginals appeared, but were warned not to enter the camp. Then leaving Mr. Theakston in the tent, the leader went towards the natives. When nearing the scrub he noticed too late several blacks concealed amongst the bushes, who, rushing out, discharged their spears. Theakston, in great distress, carried the wounded explorer to his tent and attended to his injuries. Mr. Darke, who was grievously hurt, was suffering severe pain, but was in full possession of his faculties and expressed great anxiety to reach Port Lincoln. On the following day, therefore, they travelled slowly for a short while, but then halted to rest. About 10 o'clock the leader realized that he was dying, and at midday the gallant explorer breathed his last. Thus perished another Australian hero, a victim to the treachery of the natives, to whom he had shown every kindness.

The body of the murdered leader was buried at the foot of Table-topped Peak, and on the 26th the diminished party resumed their homeward journey. Travelling night and day, they reached Port Lincoln on October 31, where the explorers, who were terribly exhausted by fatigue and thirst, were hospitably welcomed by the

* His Mount Southam and Granite Mount were identified by Stephen Hack in 1858 as being in these ranges.

settlers. An inquiry was immediately held by Mr. Driver, the Government resident, and the party then left in the Albatross for Adelaide, where they arrived on November 6.

Twenty years later while conducting a survey in the North, Mr. Thomas Evans named the hill already mentioned Darke's Peak in memory of the explorer. He, however, made no mention of the position of Darke's grave. Conflicting accounts of its situation had been given. As the land was soon to be surveyed for a railway it was desired that the grave should be located, and that a suitable monument should be erected. In 1909 Mr. E. M. Smith, then Deputy Surveyor-General, visited Port Lincoln to obtain information, and in September, with Messrs. Whyte and Stanley, two pioneer residents, journeyed to Darke's Peak. This party was successful in discovering the grave*, and in October the Government† fulfilled their promise by voting £50 for a monument. A handsome marble obelisk was then erected, bearing a suitable inscription‡.

Despite the fact that this expedition had ended so disastrously, less than two years had passed before another party set forth to dare the dangers of the north. The leader of this little band was Mr. John Ainsworth Horrocks, who had landed in South Australia in 1839, and had since given many proofs of his enterprise and daring. On his arrival Mr. Horrocks had found difficulty in procuring suitable land, and, on the recommendation of Mr. Eyre, had travelled north in search of good country. Being successful in discovering fine pastoral land, he had settled there and founded the village of Penwortham||. Short exploratory trips had already been made by this adventurous colonist, Mount Horrocks and Gulnare§ Plains being named by him.

* At Mr. Strawbridge's command Mr. W. G. Evans opened the grave to ascertain that no mistake was possible.

† At the Hon. A. von Doussa's request.

‡ Sacred to the memory of John Charles Darke, who was mortally wounded by the natives when exploring in the locality on October 23rd, 1844, and died on the following day.

Erected by the South Australian Government, 1910.

|| Named in honour of his English home, Penwortham Lodge (now Hall). In 1829 the estate of Penwortham had been sold to Mr. William Marshall.

§ So called after a favourite greyhound.

In 1846 Mr. Horrocks determined to undertake a longer journey northwards in the hopes of discovering useful pasturage. He therefore chose for his second in command Mr. John Theakston*, who had already obtained experience in the fateful expedition of 1844. The remainder of the party consisted of Mr. S. T. Gill, a clever painter of landscapes, Bernard Kilroy, the driver, Garlick, the tent-keeper, and Jimmy Moorhouse, a native boy. The equipment was well chosen, and included five horses, a cart, and the only camel then in the colony.

On July 29 the travellers left Penwortham and journeyed north, passing Mr. Robinson's station on the Hutt, and that of Mr. Hawker, and camping seven miles distant from the Broughton. On the 31st the three crossings of this river were made and Mr. Hughes's station was reached: the party now halted, while Mr. Theakston† was dispatched to Penwortham to bring up another cart and horse. Gulnare Plains were crossed on August 1, and on the following day the party camped on Rocky River. Mr. White's station at Wirrabara was now visited, the travellers resting here while waiting for Mr. Theakston's return. He arrived on the 5th, and two days later a fresh start was made. Messrs. Malcolm and Campbell's cattle run near Mount Remarkable was passed, and in company with Mr. Campbell a search was made for a suitable pass in the ranges. One was discovered which it was possible to use, and received the name of Horrocks Pass. On the 12th and 13th an excursion was made to the top of Flinders Range, while on the 17th the pass was safely negotiated.

On the 21st the party reached Depot Creek, where Eyre's tracks could still be detected, although now over six years old. The leader, with Mr. Gill, examined some table-topped hills in the vicinity, and while on this trip had an encounter with the natives, who seemed very hostile. These blacks, appearing to be unaware of the danger of firearms, jeered at the explorers' weapons, nor did

* The poor returns from land combined with the low prices for produce forced many estimable colonists into bankruptcy. These were the days before imprisonment for debt was abolished. With his customary generosity Mr. Horrocks came to the assistance of Mr. Theakston, who had fallen on evil days.

† Variations in the spelling of Mr. Theakston's name are found. In one copy of Mr. Horrocks's journal it is even given as Theatstone.



several shots have much effect in checking their ferocity. One of the men was wearing a torn red cap, which Horrocks seemed to recognize as having previously belonged to a shepherd called Southey, who had been murdered by natives. The unfortunate man and his companion had possessed guns, neither of which proved serviceable, and this would account, no doubt, for the aborigines' contempt for these weapons. On August 23 the leader returned to the camp, where he waited for Mr. Gill to finish his sketches ere setting forth on a proposed visit to the north-west.

Here Mr. Horrocks's private journal ends, but an account of his subsequent journey and the sad fatality which terminated it so abruptly, appears in his letter to the Secretary* of the Northern Expedition. On August 28, accompanied by Mr. Gill and Bernard Kilroy, Mr. Horrocks set out, taking with him provisions for three weeks, and the camel† to aid in their transportation. After a four days' journey Lake Gill (now termed Lake Dutton) was discovered, and named by the explorers. While examining this lake Kilroy noticed a beautiful bird, which he advised Mr. Horrocks to secure for his collection. "My gun being loaded with slugs in one barrel and ball in the other," says the explorer, "I stopped the camel to get at the shot belt, which I could not get without his lying down. Whilst Mr. Gill was unfastening it, I was screwing the ramrod into the wad over the slugs, standing close alongside the camel. At this moment the animal gave a lurch to one side, and caught his pack in the cock of my gun, which discharged the barrel I was unloading, the contents of which first took off the middle fingers of my right hand between the second and third joints, and entered my left cheek by my lower jaw, knocking out a row of teeth from my upper jaw."

In such terrible pain and amidst such desolate surroundings, many a man would have given way to vain regrets and bitter repining. Mr. Horrocks, however, displayed the greatest fortitude, and, indeed, at no time in his life showed more heroism than at this critical period. A study of his words concerning the accident reveals his uncomplaining spirit and shows that, despite his sufferings, he

* Mr. E. Platts.

† This animal had given evidence of a spiteful nature, having severely bitten Garlick on the head.

could still consider the welfare of the party and appreciate the devotion of his companions. He states that the travellers were sixty five miles from the depot and far from any available water supply. Bernard Kilroy at once volunteered to return to fetch Mr. Theakston to their assistance, but Horrocks was unwilling to allow him to do so, since he knew that hostile natives inhabited the stretch of country through which Kilroy must pass. The party had but five gallons of water remaining, so the leader reluctantly gave his consent to Kilroy's attempting the journey. Speaking of Kilroy's gallant effort, Mr. Horrocks continues: "He said he was not afraid: therefore he left and reached the depot next evening about nine o'clock. Having missed the tracks during the night he could not have walked less than a 100 miles from the morning of the accident to the time he arrived at the depot, having most bravely accomplished his task. Mr. Gill stopped to nurse me; his attention and kindness were not to be surpassed. Considering the distance we were away and the uncertainty of Kilroy's reaching the depot, Mr. Gill showed himself to be a brave and steady companion by remaining with me."

In his letter Mr. Horrocks also gives a description of the country, and, while regretting the forced termination of the expedition, expressed the opinion that no suitable pastoral land existed in this direction.

When the depot was reached medical assistance still being unobtainable, the journey to Penwortham had to be undertaken. Kilroy accompanied the wounded explorer, while all along his homeward route the greatest kindness was displayed by the colonists. On arriving at the village they dispatched the native boy for help, and Dr. Nott quickly responded to the appeal. Mr. Robinson gave up his cottage to the injured man, and his neighbours paid many visits of sympathy. So intrepid was his nature that hopes were held of his recovery. He would relate laughable anecdotes to his visitors until they felt that these high spirits were a sign that he was not mortally injured. This assumed gaiety, however, proved deceptive, for on the third day after his return the heroic explorer died.

Great sorrow was felt, not only amongst his family and intimate friends, but also by the colonists in general. His bravery and

patience had won the respect of all, and it was realized that South Australia had lost one of her most promising pioneers. Penwortham however remains as a tribute to his colonizing enterprise, and a tablet in the local church of St. Mark's still perpetuates his memory*.

Other minor expeditions were made to the north during the following years, among these being a trip by Dr. Chase, who in 1851 explored the country north of Arkaba. In addition exploratory journeys were made in this year by Mr. R. H. Rawnsley, of the Survey Department, who examined the country from Mount Remarkable to Wilpena Pound†, giving his name to Rawnsley's Bluff, a conspicuous peak in the neighbourhood. John McDouall Stuart, afterwards famous as the explorer of Central Australia, was also in the north in 1855 engaged in survey work, while the enterprising colonists who established cattle runs in this district did much to obtain information about their neighbourhood and to develop the northern area.

* This tablet bears the Horrocks's crest and underneath the inscription:

John Ainsworth Horrocks,
Eldest son of Peter Horrocks,
Penwortham Hall, Lancashire, England.
Landed in South Australia the day he came of age, 1839.
He founded the village of Penwortham.
Died 23rd September, 1846, Aged 26, from
a wound accidentally received during
his exploring expedition north of Spencer's Gulf.
"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

† Discovered in November, 1850, by Mr. C. M. Bagot, who applied for a licence for a run at Wilpena. The first description of this feature is given by Mr. Fred. Sinnett, surveyor.

CHAPTER XI

CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT

Few names, if any, stand higher in the annals of our State than that of Captain Sturt, the celebrated and courageous explorer. It had been Sturt's famous journey of 1829 that had first attracted public attention to South Australia and had been largely responsible for the foundation of this province. It was only natural, then, that he should be interested in the colony which resulted, and should devote much attention to the history of South Australian discovery. Many gallant though unsuccessful attempts had ere this been made in the endeavour to penetrate the interior of our State. These expeditions had, however, only demonstrated the well-nigh insurpassable difficulties which attended such a task.

Captain Sturt had watched intently these unrewarded exertions, and at length determined himself to endeavour to explore the unknown wilderness. In January, 1843, therefore, he wrote to Lord Stanley offering to lead an expedition into Central Australia via the Darling River, at the same time writing to Sir Ralph Darling to consult him on the subject. In May of 1844 a reply was received by Governor Grey, referring to a dispatch giving authority for the expedition, but the document itself was unfortunately delayed, and did not arrive until the end of June.

This hindrance frustrated Sturt's plans, for he had timed the letters so that in event of a favourable answer he would be able to set out at the most propitious time of the year. When the permission eventually arrived, the Captain found that an unqualified assent to his project had not been granted—the route proposed by Sturt was deemed to be too lengthy, and Lord Stanley desired that the party should proceed directly north from Adelaide, passing Mount Arden. This, it was hoped, would effect a saving of 500

miles. While expressing this wish, however, Lord Stanley left the decision to Sturt's judgment, but he was warned against attempting to explore the tropical north. The object of the expedition was to be "to ascertain the existence and character of that range running from the north-east to the south-west, to examine the rivers rising in it, and to observe the general appearance of the country towards the north-west."

On considering the respective merits of the two routes, Sturt became convinced of the advantageous results likely to result if the Darling route were adopted, and accordingly decided to follow this course. Preparations* were now speedily completed, and on Saturday, August 10, 1844, the main body of the party† left Adelaide. Reaching the Murray, the travellers proceeded to Moorundi, where Mr. Eyre was now stationed. Here the whole personnel of the expedition was mustered for the first time, as, owing to private affairs and other causes of delay, the full party had not hitherto been collected. Now Sturt availed himself of the opportunity to address his followers—explaining the necessity for discipline and caution during the expedition. The majority of the explorers then set out for Laidley's Ponds, where it was hoped a depot could be established, and at the Great Bend were overtaken by Sturt and Flood who had left later.

The travellers then reached Lake Bonney, where a halt was made to give the stock a needed rest. During the enforced idleness Mr. Poole surveyed the lake, while Captain Sturt and Hawker examined the creek‡, which connects it with the river. A small, desolate mountain in the neighbourhood received the name of Mount Misery, and the party then set forth for the Rufus, whither Mr. Eyre had preceded them. Here another halt was made, while Messrs. Browne and Flood were dispatched to examine the Ana-branch of the Darling, Mr. Poole in the interim inspecting Lake

* Amongst the articles taken was a boat for use on the inland sea.

† The expedition was to consist of the following members: Captain Charles Sturt, leader; James Poole, assistant; J. Harris Browne, surgeon; J. McDouall Stuart, draftsman; Louis Piesse, storekeeper; Daniel Brock, collector; George Davenport and Joseph Cowley, servants; Robert Flood, stockman; D. Morgan, with horses; J. Jones, Turpin, W. Lewis, H. Foulkes, and J. Mack, bullock drivers; J. Kirby, and R. Sullivan, with sheep.

‡ Named by Captain Sturt Hawker's Creek.

Victoria. Bad weather now intervened, so that it was not until Sept. 18 that a fresh start could be made; then, following the Anabranch, the explorers reached the Darling. Crossing the channel, the party journeyed along the banks of the river, which had diminished exceedingly in size and had dwindled to a shallow stream. On the 28th the river was observed to be as low as ever, but on the next day its aspect was completely changed: during the night it had risen more than four feet above its previous level, and was sweeping along its bed with impetuous current. On October 1 the party struck across country to save unnecessary exertion, as the river here followed a circuitous course, and after fifteen miles the banks were gained once more. As the explorers journeyed onwards they found on the 10th that progress was barred by a watercourse, which stretched across their path. "It was about fifty yards broad," says Sturt, "had low, muddy banks, and was decidedly the poorest spot we had seen of the kind. This Nadbuk* informed me was the Williorara, or Laidley's Ponds, a piece of intelligence at which I was utterly confounded. . . . It was impossible for me to remain in such a place, and I therefore turned back towards the Darling and pitched my tents at its junction with the Williorara. . . . From the point where we had now arrived the upward course of the Darling for 300 miles is to the N.E., that which I was anxious to take was to the W.N.W. It was evident, therefore, that until every attempt to penetrate the interior in that direction had proved impracticable, I should not have been justified in pushing farther up the river. My hopes of finding the Williorara a mountain stream had been wholly disappointed, and the intelligence both Mr. Eyre and I had received of the Murray natives had turned out to be false; for instead of finding it a medium by which to gain the hills, I now ascertained that it had not a course of more than nine or ten miles, and that it stood directly in my way."

As Sturt expected the Darling natives to prove hostile owing to the unfortunate dispute between Sir Thomas Mitchell and the Williorara tribe in 1836, he deemed it wisest to move from their present position as speedily as possible. Accordingly Mr. Poole was dispatched to search for a suitable camping ground. Learning from the aborigines that water and grass could be obtain-

* The native guide of the party.

ed at Cawndilla*, the leader also sent Mr. Browne to examine this lake. He reported that although not all that could be desired, it would serve as a halting place, while on the 15th Mr. Poole returned and stated that "he did not succeed in finding any convenient place to which to remove the party." Sturt now determined to journey to Cawndilla, and on the 17th encamped there. "The position we had taken up," says the explorer, "was a very favourable one, since, being on the right or northern bank of the creek, we were by the flooding of the lake cut off from the Darling natives."

Sturt now decided to make an excursion inland to examine the ranges which Mr. Poole stated he had seen when on his expedition. On the 21st, therefore, he left camp with Messrs. Browne, Flood, and Morgan, and a native boy, Topar. The country traversed was more open and barren in appearance than that already examined, and a small pool of water surrounded by grass was discovered. A beautiful pond was also seen, but owing to lack of verdure was not visited by Sturt. On the following day a range was ascended and a view of the dreary country was obtained. As the leader was desirous to find a suitable camping ground a return was made to the waterhole and, on examining it, Sturt became convinced that a halt might be safely made for ten days, or even longer, in its vicinity.

Returning to Cawndilla the whole party now moved to the new watercourse which was known as "Parnari," but on November 4 the tents were removed to the upper part of the glen, where a little pond of clear water had been discovered. The following day saw Sturt, with Messrs. Browne, Flood, Lewis and Sullivan, set out once more to examine the country to the north-west. Crossing the ranges, the travellers pushed on, but on the 7th Lewis and Sullivan were dispatched to camp while Sturt, Browne and Flood journeyed onwards. Ascending a high hill the explorers obtained a view of the country, and the mount received the name of Lewis's Hill. Amongst the ranges a small glen was discovered in which was a pool of clear fresh water, which was hailed with delight by the travellers. Using this as a base, Sturt and his companions made many expeditions into the neighbouring country: inferior land prevailed, however,

* Laidley's Ponds served as a channel of communication between the Darling and the two lakes of Minandichi and Cawndilla.

and no discoveries of value were found: a return was, therefore, made to the depot. Sturt now resolved to move the main party to the rocky gully which he had found, while Mr. Poole should push on ahead to reconnoitre. "I directed him," says Sturt, "to pursue a general north-west course as the one most likely to determine the questions on the several points to which I called his attention. Should you," I said, "reach the shores of Lake Torrens, or any body of water of unknown extent, you will endeavour to gain every information in that head; but if you should not strike any basin of either description, you will do your uttermost to ascertain if a westerly course is open to us, after you shall have reached lat. 30°, to enable me to gain the 138° meridian, as soon as circumstances will permit. Should the supply of water, which the recent rains will ensure for a time, be likely to fail, or if the rains should not have extended as far as you would desire to go, and your advance be thus rendered hazardous, it will be discretionary with you to return direct to camp, or turn to the eastward and proceed along the western flanks of the ranges, but you are on no account to endanger either yourself or your party by an attempt to push into the interior to a distance beyond that which prudence might reasonably justify."

On the 20th, therefore, Mr. Poole set out in company with Mr. Browne, and on the 22nd the rest of the explorers started for the rocky glen. On December 2 Poole returned, reporting barren and sterile country ahead. He also stated that several brackish lakes had been passed, and that while opposite three remarkable peaks, similar in appearance to those mapped by Mr. Eyre, he had been compelled to turn homewards. It was evident, then, that he had gained the lower shore of Lake Torrens or some similar feature.

On the 4th Flood was dispatched to the north to search for water and returned on the 7th with the welcome news that "he had found a beautiful little creek, in which there were long deep water-holes shaded by gum-trees, with an abundance of grass in its neighbourhood." This was especially cheering as the supply of water at their present site had become nearly exhausted, so that, in event of an unfavourable account of the country ahead, Sturt would have been forced to turn back. As the stream discovered was stated to be forty miles distant, the party set forth on the 9th, and crossing

barren land, reached the watercourse, which received the name of Flood's Creek*. It proved to be all that had been claimed for it: "everything," says Sturt, "in the neighbourhood . . . looked fresh, vigorous and green."

On the 11th Messrs. Poole and Browne were dispatched once more in search of water, with orders to keep somewhat to the north-east, but to use their own discretion as to the route to be adopted. Flood, in addition, was sent to ride along the base of the neighbouring ranges, with instructions to return shortly. . . . "We were," says the leader, "gradually and, I think, steadily working our way into the interior."

Two days later, leaving the camp under Mr. Piesse's command, Sturt, with Mr. Stuart and Mr. Flood, started to examine the country stretching between Flood's Creek and the Darling. On the morrow Mount Lyell was visible, and, says the explorer, "I had expected that we should have found some creek near it, but the moment my eyes fell on that naked and desolate mountain my hopes vanished." On ascending the hill he saw before him a most dreary and disappointing district; dark and gloomy trees stretched for miles on every side, while to the eastward distant ranges extended. Deciding not to push on to Mount Babbage, which could be clearly seen, Sturt turned back convinced that the tract towards the Darling was sterile and inhospitable.

On the 23rd Flood was dispatched once more to the north-east with Lewis, and, returning on Christmas Day, stated that he had found several supplies of surface water. On the same day Messrs. Poole and Browne arrived at camp and reported that they had nearly reached the 28th parallel, having discovered an abundance of water, although they were doubtful as to the permanency of the supply. In his account Poole stated that on the 13th, by watching the flight of pigeons they had been able to find a small pool, and on the following day had reached a mountain which he termed the Magnetic Hill.† From here was seen a flat-topped hill to which they journeyed. Shortly after leaving this they crossed several creeks containing large pools of water, and on the next

* In some accounts Sturt speaks of Flood Creek.

† The north point of the compass here deviated to within 3° of the south point. It was afterwards named Mount Arrowsmith.

day another stream was passed, the water of which was unfortunately muddy and the banks barren. Stony sterile plains were now crossed, and, as the horses were suffering severely, a halt was called; on the following morning with Mr. Browne he rode to the ranges. The view from these hills was so discouraging that the party turned back to the depot.

On hearing this report Sturt was doubtful whether he should advance or abandon the attempt and turn homewards. The danger of a failure of the water supply was considerable, for it appeared probable that the party might be cut off from retreat by the drying up of the watercourses on their homeward route. Mr. Poole, however, was so hopeful concerning the probable permanency of the supplies discovered that Sturt decided to struggle on northwards.

On December 28, therefore, a start was made, Mr. Poole guiding the main body of the travellers, while Sturt, with Messrs. Browne and Stuart, made a final ascent of the ranges. "Once on the top we stood," the leader writes, "on the highest and last point of the Barrier Range; for, although, as we shall learn, other ranges existed to the north, there was a broad interval of plain between us and them, nor were they visible from our position. We stood, as it were, in the centre of barrenness." At dawn of the following day Mr. Poole saw, as he imagined, the hill whither he was desirous of leading the party, and accordingly a course was steered for it. After the travellers crossed a belt of scrub, a succession of "sandy ridges" was encountered. This resembled the country previously crossed by Mr. Poole, and, as on that occasion, the desert had soon ceased, he urged the party forward in hopes of a speedy termination to such a desolate tract. "In vain," says Sturt, "did the men urge their bullocks over successive ridges of deep loose sand; the moment they had topped one, there was another before them to ascend." This unavailing exertion weakened the travellers, and as the heat became so unbearable, the leader halted the party and dispatched the spare horses and sheep in advance. Then, starting once more, led by Mr. Browne, the explorers finally succeeded in reaching a lagoon. The water was foul and muddy and was rapidly diminishing; indeed, it proved so disagreeable that a well was sunk in order to obtain a better supply.

On the 4th Messrs. Poole and Browne were sent in advance to locate the next camping ground, and returned next day with their mission accomplished. As the water at their present situation was nearly exhausted a move was made on the 7th, and on the 10th their destination was reached. The water here, too, was rapidly drying up, so, realizing the necessity of a permanent supply, Sturt determined to journey himself in search of it.

On the 14th, therefore, he set out, and tracing the creek passed Red Hill (subsequently called Mount Poole). On the morrow the muddy creek mentioned by Poole was followed and a group of flat-topped hills were reached. A stream with a good water supply was then discovered, but on one of the mounts being ascended a gloomy and forbidding region was seen. Turning back Sturt traced the creek previously passed to the hills, while another watercourse was discovered which contained a pond of clear water. Now, following the Northern Ranges once more, their termination was reached. On the 19th a desolate desert was entered and "the sand ridges succeeded each other like waves of the sea." These hillocks were covered with spinifex, which added to the difficulty of the explorers' progress. Another small range was now sighted, but when Sturt reached its summit "a gloomy sea of scrub without a break in its monotonous surface" met the gaze of the travellers. "Had other hills," writes Sturt, "appeared to the north I should have made for them, but to have descended into such a district as that below me seemed to be too hazardous an experiment at this stage of our journey. I determined therefore to return to the main range and examine it to the north-east. I could not but think, however, from the appearance of the country as far as we had gone, that we could not be very far from the outskirts of an inland sea, it so precisely resembled a low and barren seacoast. This idea, I may say, haunted me, and was the cause of my making a second journey to the same locality."

As he had now been absent for twelve days, Sturt deemed it wisest to return, fearing lest all the water at the camp should have become exhausted. On the 24th the depot was reached and it was found that the party were dependent on the uncertain supply obtained from a well dug in the bed of the creek. To his great delight Sturt now learned of a discovery of the utmost value which

had been made by Mr. Poole in his absence. On examining a small range to the northward he had discovered a large and deep sheet of water, at the head of which was a rocky glen containing several pools of water. This supply seemed both permanent and inexhaustible, and he had only awaited Sturt's return to move to this more suitable position. The party now journeyed to their new destination and camped beside the lagoon.

"We pitched our tents," writes the famous explorer, "at the place which I shall henceforth call the Depot, on the 27th of January, 1845. They were not struck again until the 17th of July following. This ruinous detention paralyzed the efforts and enervated the strength of the expedition by constitutionally affecting both the men and animals, and depriving them of the elasticity and energy with which they commenced their labours. It was not, however, until after we had been down every creek in our neighbourhood, and had traversed the country in every direction, that the truth flashed across my mind, and it became evident to me that we were locked up in the desolate and heated region, into which we had penetrated, as effectually as if we had wintered at the Pole."

A few days after arrival at this spot Mr. Browne became seriously ill, but fortunately recovered. The men also were in poor health, and Sturt himself suffered severely.

Meanwhile efforts were made to connect the country examined and to complete charts of the land seen as far as their present situation. The heat now grew so intense that the explorers constructed an underground room which proved of great value, making a difference of from seven to eight degrees in the temperature. As a small range could be seen about twenty miles to the west, Sturt decided to travel thither, hoping to obtain a view of Mount Serle or to be successful in discovering more promising country. Accordingly on February 7 he set out with Mr. Poole and two of the men, but on arriving at the ranges discovered still more rising ground to the westward. He was, however, prevented from examining this by the sudden illness of Mr. Poole, and a return to the camp was immediately made.

Unable to remain inactive, the leader determined to visit once more the limits of his former journey of the 18th of January, in the

hopes that an inland sea might exist. As both Mr. Poole and Mr. Browne were far from well, Messrs. Stuart and Flood, with a lad named Joseph Cowley, were chosen to accompany Sturt. He had resolved to reach the most distant waterhole previously discovered, and thence to push on with Cowley, taking with them a light cart loaded with water. By this expedient he had hopes of gaining the 27th parallel. On the 10th, as a large pool of water had been discovered in the creek previously examined, the party subdivided, and Sturt and his companion journeyed onwards.

As the explorers advanced, however, the country changed for the worse, and a region of spinifex and sand was entered. Fortunately the weather was cool, but, despite this advantage, the heavy country told rapidly upon the horse, and by the 13th the cart was, perforce, abandoned. Ridge after ridge was crossed, but nothing of value was seen, and on mounting a small hill the travellers saw that no apparent improvement took place in the character of the country. The explorers had now passed the 28th parallel, but so unpromising was the district they had entered that they were forced to turn reluctantly homewards. The journey back to the creek was a trying one, the exhausted horse being almost unable to struggle onwards. Sturt now determined to trace the creek, trusting that it would prove a means of advance into the interior, and after following its course was delighted to discover a beautiful fertile plain. This, however, was limited in area, for soon the sandy desert was encountered once more. As the heat was now terrific a return was deemed prudent, and on the 22nd the depot was reached.

Not for long, however, could Sturt remain idle, and on the 12th of March he set out again, accompanied by Mr. Browne, Mr. Flood, and one of the men. On this journey the course of the main creek was followed, but, no discoveries of any importance being made, the party returned to the depot on the 21st of the month. The explorers now remained stationary for some time and, although the most intense of the summer heat was over, they were still oppressed by intervals of sultry weather. During the hot season the sufferings of the party had been terrible; no rain had fallen for four months and not even a dew had moistened the surface of the ground. So fierce was the heat that prevailed that, as

Sturt says, "Under its effects every screw in our boxes had been drawn, and the horn handles of our instruments, as well as our combs, were split into fine laminæ. The lead dropped out of our pencils, our signal rockets were entirely spoiled; our hair, as well as the wool on the sheep, ceased to grow, and our nails had become as brittle as glass. The flour lost more than eight per cent. of its weight, and the other provisions in a still greater proportion. . . . It was happy for us, therefore, that a cooler season set in, otherwise I do not think that many of us could much longer have survived."

The condition of the explorers was rendered still more terrible by the outbreak of the dread disease of scurvy. This had attacked the three officers, Sturt, Poole and Browne, owing to the frequent exposure they had undergone on their numerous expeditions.

On the 18th of April clouds were seen massed in the western sky and distant thunder was heard. This aroused hopes of success in pushing inland, and on the 21st, therefore, Sturt set out with Mr. Browne and Mr. Flood under the impression that he might be successful in travelling into the north-western interior. This belief proved, however, unfounded, for the party were once more forced to turn back by lack of water. On arrival at the depot the travellers were dismayed to hear of Mr. Poole's illness. Despite the assistance and kindness of Mr. Browne, he became steadily worse and was unable to move, while the other two officers were also suffering from the same disease in a less severe form.

On the 12th of May, Mr. Poole being slightly improved, another short excursion was undertaken by Sturt, but as usual terminated in disappointment, and on returning to the camp the explorers were still further distressed to hear that Mr. Poole had undergone a relapse.

"From this period," states the leader, "I gave up all hope of success in any future effort I might make to escape from our dreary prison. Day after day and week after week passed over our heads, without any apparent likelihood of any change in the weather. The consequences of our detention weighed heavily on my mind, and depressed my spirits, for in looking over Mr. Piesse's monthly return of provisions on hand I found that unless some step was taken to enable me to keep the field, I should, on the fall of rain, be obliged to retreat. I had by severe exertion gained

a most commanding position, the wide field of the interior lay like an open sea before me, and yet every sanguine hope I had ever indulged appeared as if about to be extinguished." What expedient to adopt was the question which now confronted Sturt. If the party were subdivided, nine retained, and the remainder dispatched to Adelaide, the provisions would prove sufficient to last to the end of December. By this time it seemed probable Sturt would have penetrated the interior and fulfilled the object of the expedition.

One day while Sturt was visiting his sick companion the latter suggested the erection of landmarks on Red and Black Hills. Sturt adopted this idea not so much because of the utility of such stations, but as a means of keeping the men occupied and thus preventing them from becoming depressed. Accordingly a pyramid of stones was erected on Red Hill*, a manumnt that was destined to mark the lonely resting-place of a gallant explorer.

On June 15 Sturt commenced to prepare for leaving the depot. No sign of rain was yet visible, but much remained to be done, and the exertion of completing arrangements for a start roused and encouraged the explorers. Mr. Poole was informed of the proposed subdivision of the party and was placed in charge of the returning detachment. A dray was therefore prepared for him, as he was still incapable of any effort. The days now passed in anxious expectation of rain, but it was not until July 12 that the eagerly awaited drops fell. Although steady, the shower was not sufficient to enable the party to set out, but on the morning of the 14th a considerable downfall had completely saturated the surrounding country, and departure was now possible.

The party bound for Adelaide then started and was accompanied by Mr. Browne, who was to see them safely on their way. He had been offered by Sturt the option of returning also, but had declined, preferring to stay by his leader until the end, whether it proved successful or the reverse. On the 16th Joseph Cowley returned with the melancholy tidings of Mr. Poole's sudden death and on the following day the unfortunate explorer was buried near the depot, the scene of so many sufferings.

The homeward bound party was now placed under the com-

* A monument has since been erected.

mand of Mr. Piesse, "and," says the leader, "a more trustworthy or a more anxious officer could not have been attached to such a service as that in which he was employed."

On the 18th the remaining nine departed for the north-west, and in ten days' time had succeeded in attaining a new depot, which received the name of the Park and later of Fort Grey. Ordering a stockyard to be built for the cattle and directing that a garden be prepared, Sturt set out again on June 30 to overtake Messrs. Browne and Stuart, who had preceded him. As they journeyed onwards the country was observed to increase in sterility, while the water supply became exceedingly scarce. By August 2 a change was apparent in the general appearance of the district. This was salsolaceous in character, resembling a desolate seashore, and low, broad sandhills were frequent. Ranges could be seen in the distance, while two salt lagoons were noticed. A high sandhill was now attained, and further progress to the west was found to be barred by a sandy basin which lay across their path, and to the northward and southward of which hollow could be seen sheets of salt water. This Sturt assumed was Lake Torrens*, and it now only remained for him to discover if the land to the north-west would prove less barren.

As there was danger of their water supply ceasing, Sturt now turned back to the depot, determining to examine this region more extensively at a later period. On arrival at the camp all was found to be progressing favourably, but the leader decided before venturing with the whole party to the north-west to examine the country himself to decide if further advance were practicable. The results of this journey would decide the success or failure of the expedition, and accordingly great care was taken in the preparations for departure.

In company then with Browne, Flood, Lewis, and Cowley, Sturt left the Park on August 14, taking with him provisions for fifteen weeks. As they journeyed towards the north-west sand ridges covered with spinifex prevailed along the line of route. On the 18th, however, a fine creek† was found, but, being unwilling to turn aside from his chosen line of march, Sturt journeyed onwards.

* Really Lake Frome.

† Strzelecki's Creek.

A few creeks and waterholes were passed, but no discoveries of very great interest were made until on the 23rd large and well-grassed plains were entered. This led to the belief that a fertile region existed ahead, but suddenly these hopes were dashed to the ground by the sight of a high wall of sand stretching across their path. Most fatiguing country was now crossed, ridge after ridge of sand adding to the difficulties of transit. Luckily a supply of water was discovered, and this enabled the explorers to struggle on.

On the following morning a large plain was seen with numerous sand ridges terminating in it. This flat extent of land was covered with stones; no vegetation existed and no object of any description broke the monotony of the landscape. On the 27th a belt of polygonum was passed, and now an earthy plain was entered, "resembling in appearance a boundless piece of ploughed land, on which floods had settled and subsided—the earth seemed to have once been mud and then dried." This too was devoid of any vegetation.

A range of hills could be discerned in the distance, but, on reaching this, the travellers realized that the terrible sand ridges were once more across their route. Ascending one of the mounts, they saw desolate and flat expanses stretching into the horizon. Descending, the explorers travelled over a large and barren plain, and Sturt was troubled with fears lest the return journey should prove impossible. On September 4 a discovery of great value was made by Flood, who chanced upon a beautiful creek*, containing a large supply of water and with well-grassed banks. As the party followed its course a small lake was seen, but the stream seemed to disappear†, and a salsolaceous, sterile region succeeded.

On the 7th a salt creek was noticed, the channel of which was white as snow. Crossing this the travellers struggled on, but were soon forced to realize that a position had been reached where it seemed dangerous to advance further. Mr. Browne was suffering severely from a recurrence of his former malady, and the men, who were considerably weakened by the fatiguing exertions they had

* Named by Sturt Eyre's Creek.

† Had Sturt but known it he was near large permanent rivers which would have afforded a means of penetrating the interior.

undergone, were feeling the effects of their reduced rations. In addition the horses were rapidly becoming exhausted, and it seemed doubtful if they would be able to perform the return journey. The country was also of the most disheartening character; parallel ridges of deep red sand covered "with sickly pink and glaucous vegetation" extended northwards in apparently unending succession. Thus, considering all these obstacles, Sturt realized it would be madness to attempt to proceed farther inland, and, although within a hundred and fifty miles of the centre of the continent, the explorers were forced to realize the folly of any further advance.

Falling back on the creek, Sturt made another attempt to push on, but grass and water both failing, the leader was compelled to abandon all ideas of progress to the north. Nor could the party remain here until rain fell once more, and then attack the mystery of the interior again. It was obvious that the water supply between Eyre's Creek and the Park was rapidly diminishing, while in a few days it would be totally exhausted. It was therefore necessary to hasten back to the depot, where they arrived on October 2, "after," says Sturt, "an absence of seven weeks, during which we had ridden more than eight hundred miles."

Sturt, however, had not yet despaired of attaining the centre of Australia, and had now decided to divide the party once more, and dispatching Mr. Browne homeward with four of the men, retained Mr. Stuart with two others to assist him. On mentioning this proposal to Mr. Browne, however, he met with a determined opposition, this officer being unwilling to leave his leader to what seemed to him certain death. The rest of the expedition, therefore, remained at the Fort, while Sturt with Mr. Stuart, Morgan, and Mack set out on October 9 on a last attempt to penetrate Central Australia.

On this journey Sturt had determined to push due north from Strzelecki Creek in the hopes that this route would prove more practicable. Traversing the plains he reached a fine creek*, surrounded by imposing gumtrees, and the explorers once more hoped that fertile country would be found to extend northwards. While Sturt was considering the question of abandoning his proposed line of march in order to follow the creek a sudden storm settled the

* Named after Sir Charles Cooper, a South Australian judge.

problem for him. This unexpected and opportune downpour made it possible to travel towards the north, as a supply of surface water would now be obtainable.

As they journeyed on, the sandy ridges were encountered once more. "I really shuddered," says Sturt, "at the reappearance of those solid waves, which I had hoped we had left behind." A large sheet of water was sighted by the explorers, but on approaching nearer they found it was foul and undrinkable. Sand ridges, sal-solaceous plains, spinifex country, and barren flats succeeded until it was felt they were bordering upon the dreaded Stony Desert once more. These fears were well founded, for on the 19th the travellers came unexpectedly upon its gloomy and treeless waste.

Travelling across it, Sturt reached a high sandhill, and to the north-west could be seen a succession of similar mounds. On the 21st, ascending one of the highest of these hills, the party obtained a view of perhaps the most inhospitable and dreary stretch they had yet seen. To the south-east were the sandhills which they had crossed, but in every other direction the desert extended in an unbroken expanse. So unlikely did any chance of success in this sterile region seem that Sturt was forced to recognize the necessity for a return.

Arriving at a water supply* the leader allowed the men to rest, while in company with Mr. Stuart he endeavoured to find a passage across the desert to the north-east. This attempt too was unsuccessful. On the 28th Cooper's Creek was reached again, and Sturt spent some time examining its course, following the stream to its source. Once more the party turned homewards, as it seemed probable that Mr. Browne would have been obliged to move from Fort Grey to the old depot, and if this were so a hundred and seventy more miles would have to be traversed by the exhausted explorers. The Park was reached on the 12th, but, as they had anticipated, was deserted. A letter was found from Mr. Browne explaining his movements, so pushing on the travellers rejoined their companions on the 17th. It was now necessary to commence the retreat to the Darling, and Sturt entertained grave doubts as to its practicability. Frequent excursions in the neighbourhood of Rocky Glen demonstrated that there was no water nearer than

* This was discovered by observing the flight of a pigeon.

Flood's Creek, if, indeed, any still remained there. As this stream was 118 miles distant, it would have been absolute folly to have ventured thither on the mere chance of success. Sturt was incapable of performing this journey, as he was in severe pain owing to a recurrence of the scurvy, but Mr. Browne generously volunteered to hazard the attempt. Accordingly one of the bullocks was shot and its hide filled with water. This was dispatched on a dray, and a day later Mr. Browne followed, taking the light cart with a further supply. On the eighth day after his departure he returned. "There is still water in the creek," he said, "but that is all I can say. What there is is as black as ink, and we must make haste, for in a week it will be gone."

They left both the boat and the heavier stores; a supply of water in bullock skins was taken upon the drays, and on December 6 the party set out on their journey of 270 miles to the Darling. Flood's Creek was successfully reached on the morning of the 10th, and the travellers halted to rest, while Mr. Browne and Flood examined the country ahead. On the following day Flood returned, reporting that water had been found eighteen miles distant. Journeying thither the party proceeded to a second creek; then learning from Mr. Browne that an abundance of water existed at Rocky Gully, they travelled thither.

One hundred and sixteen miles intervened between this position and the Darling, but by the 16th the explorers had covered forty-five miles. As they pushed on towards Cawndilla a letter which had been nailed to a tree by Mr. Piesse was found. He stated that he had placed a barrel of water a little further on and that he had sent natives inland to obtain news of their progress, but they had returned without success. Soon Cawndilla was reached, and the explorers' safety was now assured. On the 26th the party set out on their last stage, and by January 15, 1846, had reached Moorundi.

"I cannot but speak well of all the men," writes the leader, "in their respective capacities, as having always displayed a willingness to bear with me, whenever I called on them to do so, the fatigues and exposures incidental to such a service, as that on which I was employed."

A year and a half had been spent by the explorers amidst most desolate and inhospitable surroundings. What, it may be asked, was the result of this sacrifice?

"Viewing the object for which the expedition was equipped and its results," Sturt says, "there can, I think, be no doubt as to the non-existence of any mountain ranges in the interior of Australia; but, on the contrary, that its central regions are nearly, if not quite, on a sea-level, and that the north coast is separated from the south as effectually as if seas rolled between them." This attitude of despair is not to be wondered at when we recall the patient yet unsuccessful efforts of the party to gain the centre of Australia, and, though time has proved Sturt's conclusion erroneous, his belief was, considering these failures, most natural.

"My weary task," he says, "has been performed. . . . I would yet hope that those who shall hereafter enter the field of Australian discovery will profit from my experience, and be spared many of the inconveniences and sufferings to which I was unavoidably exposed." This hope has been realized, and it cannot be doubted that it was Sturt's pioneer exploration which rendered possible the later achievements of John McDouall Stuart.

CHAPTER XII

THE HORSESHOE MYTH

In 1839, while on an expedition to the north, Mr. Eyre had made a discovery which was to prove of the greatest importance in the history of South Australian exploration. Ten miles to the northward of Mount Arden a high and rocky hill had been sighted, and journeying thither the traveller had ascended it in order to obtain a view of the country ahead. This had proved most discouraging in appearance: to the north lay a rocky and sandy tract with no vegetation save a few stunted bushes upon its surface, to the east rugged and barren ranges obscured the horizon, while to the west and north-west could be discerned a broad and glittering belt of water. It seemed to Eyre most probable that this shining strip would prove to be the dry and glazed bed of a lake. "As I gazed," he says, "on the dismal scene before me, I felt assured I had approached the vast and dreary desert of the interior or, it might be, was verging on the confines of some inland water whose sterile and desolate shores seem to forbid the traveller's approach." Turning back, Eyre left the solution of this problem to a later date.

While on his journey from Port Lincoln the explorer once more visited this locality, and on this occasion he writes, "It was evident that what I had taken on my last journey to be the bed of a dry lake, now contained water and was of considerable size; but as my time was very limited, and the lake at a considerable distance, I had to forego my wish to visit it. I have, however, no doubt of its being salt from the nature of the country and the fact of finding the water very salt in one of the creeks draining into it from the hills. Beyond this lake (which I distinguished with the name of Colonel Torrens) to the westward was a low, flat-topped range, extending north-westerly as far as I could see."

During his famous journey of 1840, Eyre again visited the lake he had discovered. Leaving his depot at Mount Arden, he had pushed north on a preliminary examination of the country beyond Mount Eyre, the termination of his previous expedition. Crossing sandy country, where their laborious progress was still further impeded by lack of water, the explorer reached his destination, and the dry bed of the lake was seen, coated over with a crust of salt, forming one unbroken sheet of pure white and glittering brilliancy in the sun. "On stepping upon this, I found it yielded to the foot, and that below the surface the bed of the lake consisted of a soft mud, and the farther we advanced to the westward the more boggy it got, so that at last it became quite impossible to proceed."

At a later period of the same expedition, Eyre once more essayed to penetrate the interior, and travelling to the north-west was compelled to turn back, as a salt marsh similar in appearance to Lake Torrens again barred his path. Two other attempts to gain Central Australia were foiled by salt lagoons, which rendered further progress impossible. By a curious freak of fate he had on each occasion been baffled by a different lagoon, and could, had he but known it, have discovered a passage between these swamps. Concluding, however, that these separate sheets of water were part of one immense lagoon, he became convinced that Lake Torrens completely prevented any exploration of Central Australia, and sweeping in a huge horseshoe entirely prevented communication with the northern districts.

One final attempt was, however, made by Eyre, but on reaching Mount Hopeless a level and arid plain was seen stretching into the distance, broken only by sandy hillocks or the ridges surrounding the lake. Eyre was now positive that this mysterious stretch of water extended in an uninterrupted and circuitous course, effectually preventing any further progress.

This theory caused great consternation on the publication of Eyre's despatches, for, if this were so, all hope of extending the colony to the north must be abandoned and the cherished idea of finding useful pasturage in that region would also prove impracticable. Determined to make sure that such was the case before definitely deserting the north as a field of discovery, the Government dispatched Captain Frome to Lake Torrens to obtain further

information. This expedition was not successful in fulfilling its object, and although Lake Torrens was reached shortage of provisions and lack of water hindered the travellers, and nothing that could prove or disprove "the Horseshoe Theory" was discovered.

In 1844 the dangerous and difficult journey undertaken by Sturt was instrumental in securing a little more knowledge on the subject of the lake. The Home Government in their instructions to the explorer had advocated the Mount Arden route, but as, according to Eyre's statement, this would bring the party upon the centre of the Horseshoe, Sturt adopted the Darling plan in the hopes that he would thus avoid the lake barrier. He was not so fortunate, however, and on August 2 a salt lagoon was passed, which was in reality an arm of Lake Torrens. Beyond this was seen an "immense and shallow sandy basin, in which were detached sheets of water, as blue as indigo and as salt as brine." This feature, which is now known to be Lake Frome, was mistaken by Sturt for the dreaded Torrens, and the party turned back.

This failure increased the belief that the colony was to the north encircled by Lake Torrens, which would prove an impassable barrier to exploration. What the prevailing opinion on this subject was can be seen from a description of the lake given by Colonel Gawler when delivering a lecture before the Royal Geographical Society.

"Picture to the mind," he said, "the dimensions of that lake. Let us place ourselves on Highgate Hill, near London, and if it were possible to carry the eye to Gravesend or Chatham, that would be the breadth of it near its south-western extremity. Carry on the breadth from London to Newcastle-on-Tyne, diminishing the width to twelve miles; then turn that line into something like a horseshoe, and you have an idea of what we know of Lake Torrens."

There were, however, still a few who did not accept this disappointing belief, but who held that if the western side of the lake were essayed an unimpeded course would be found.

In 1851 the elucidation of this problem was undertaken by Messrs. Oakden and Hulkes, who set out upon a private excursion in search of pasturage. Leaving the head of Spencer's Gulf, they journeyed to the westward of Lake Torrens, and explored a large tract of country. Their exact route is not known, but from informa-

tion supplied to the Commissioner of Lands on their application for a pastoral licence it appears that they had discovered a fine lake of fresh water, called by the aboriginals "Karndan Yumbo." In addition they had learnt from the natives of other lagoons to the north-west where luxuriant grass and abundance of game could be obtained.

Mr. Hulkes was of the opinion that they were on the verge of a watershed, but was unfortunately unable to proceed further. He determined, however, to revisit this district, but was prevented from fulfilling his intention by the discovery of the gold-fields which drew public attention thither.

This view of the country seemed unduly optimistic, just as the horseshoe theory was certainly over pessimistic. Fresh water assuredly can be discovered at certain periods of the year, but this is only after the rainy season, and the supply is soon exhausted. Little reliance can be placed on the accounts given by the blacks who are notoriously inaccurate in their reports.

The gold rush, it has been stated, now absorbed public interest, and it was not until 1856 that another party visited Lake Torrens. Nor was this movement initiated from a desire for geographical knowledge, but from a desire for the discovery of gold. Mr. Herschel Babbage had, accordingly, been dispatched to examine the colony in search of the precious metal, and, having been unsuccessful in his journeys in the settled districts, determined to travel to the north concerning the auriferous character of which nothing was known. He therefore started from Mount Serle on a three weeks' journey, and on leaving the Flinders Range found himself in an extensive plain. Here he examined several fine sheets of water, to the largest of which he gave the name of Blanchewater, and also discovered McDonnell Creek, named in honour of the South Australian Governor. Eyre in his expedition must have been in the vicinity of these "reservoirs," but unfortunately missed them, and thus became convinced that this region was entirely destitute of all permanent supplies.

Moving to the south-east he discovered another large creek and a remarkable and isolated hill was seen. This Mr. Babbage visited, and then, returning, succeeded in finding another water-course. The natives informed the explorer that if this were followed

he would reach a crossing place, and although a little water would be found in the lake at that place, it would be possible to ford it. This has since been found to be correct, but at the time it proved impossible, for on attempting to do so Mr. Babbage lost his horses and was compelled to return.

The discoveries made were, it can be seen, not very extensive, nor did they add to the important possessions of the colony, but they are of great interest as being the first step in a series of expeditions which were to lead to the elucidation of the Torrens problem and to prove "the Horseshoe Theory" fallacious.

It was not, however, until 1858, through the united efforts of Mr. Babbage and Colonel Warburton, that this question was to be finally settled. Of this, says Favenc, "no longer was this terror of the north to extend its encircling arms against all advancement. Henceforth its isolated character was decided, and the supposed continuations known under independent names." This final settlement of the Torrens question was of the utmost importance in the history of our progress, for with the removal of the lake barrier the way lay open for future development. The year then which witnessed the solution of the horseshoe problem marked the inauguration of a new era in the records of South Australian exploration.

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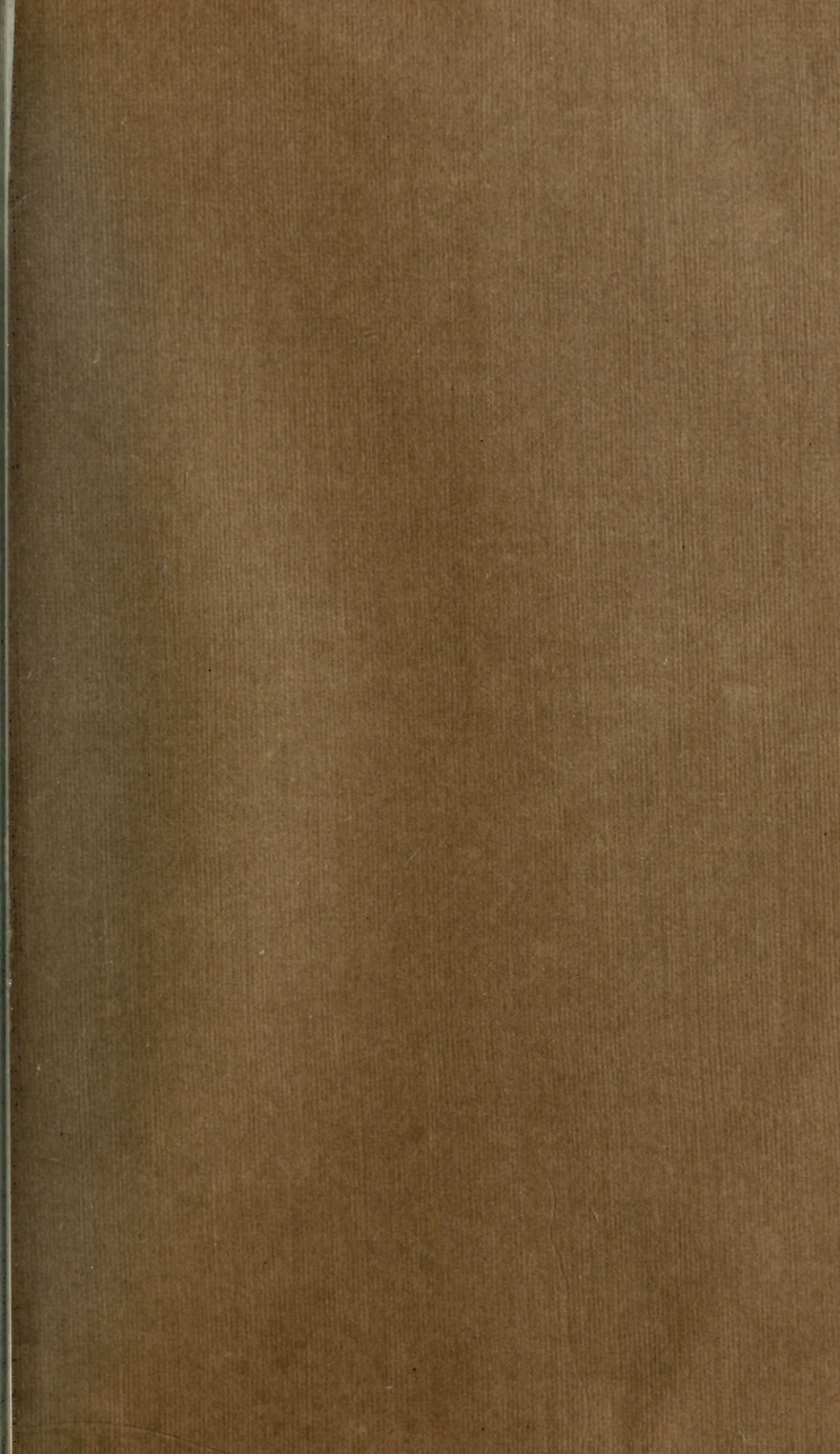
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